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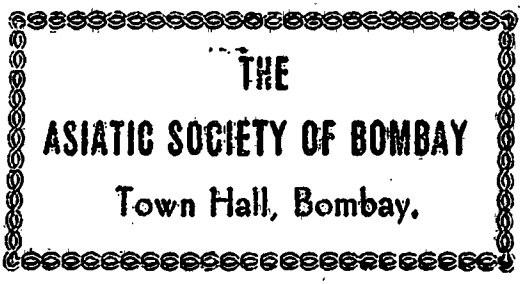

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MEMOIRS

OF THE

RIVAL HOUSES

OF

YORK AND LANCASTER,

HISTORICAL AND BIOGRAPHICAL:

EMBRACING

A PERIOD OF ENGLISH HISTORY

FROM

THE ACCESSION OF RICHARD II. TO THE DEATH OF HENRY VII.

BY EMMA ROBERTS.

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MEMOIRS

OF THE

RIVAL HOUSES

OF

YORK AND LANCASTER.

CHAPTER I.

Brilliant Prospects at the Opening of Henry's Reign—Valour of the English Captains—Battle of Vernueil—Slaughter of the Scottish Allies of France—Jeopardy of Charles VII.—his Retreat—Biographical Sketch of Richard Beauchamp—his early Prowess—his foreign Travels—Jousts at Verona—Pilgrimage to the Holy Sepulchre—Courtesy of the Soldan's Lieutenant—Celebrity of the Famous Guy—Warwick is engaged to serve the Prince of Wales by Indenture—his Zeal in the Service of Religion—he is made Captain of Calais—Attends the Council of Constance—kills a foreign Nobleman at a Tilt—Compliment paid to him by the Empress—his Favour at the Emperor's Court—his courteous Conduct at Calais—he devises a new Point in Chivalry—overthrows three Knights at a Tournament—his magnificent Gifts to his Opponents—is made Tutor to the King—is appointed to the Command in France—the Splendour of his Retinue—his Death—curious Inscription on his Tomb—Extracts from his Will—amusing Injunctions—Memoir of Thomas Montacute—permitted the Title of Earl by Courtesy—Favours bestowed by Henry V.—his Reputation in France—Beauty of his Countess—his Jealousy of the Duke of Burgundy—The Duke of Bedford tilts for the first time—Salisbury's Death before Orleans—the vulgar Horror of Gun-shot Wounds—The Earl of Salisbury's charitable Donations—Directions respecting his Funeral—Extracts from his

Will—second Marriage of his Widow—her Tomb at Ewelme—Supposition respecting the Order of the Garter—Robes worn by Ladies—other Particulars relating to their Participation in the Order—Attempt to revive the Ancient Privileges—Sketch of Talbot's military Career—his Exploits in France—Capture on the Field of Patay—Honourable Conduct of Charles VII.—Talbot's Gratitude to Saintrailles—Present from the French King—Talbot's Successes in Guienne—his Defeat and Death—Oration of the Herald—Fuller's Encomium—Parallel drawn by Sir Walter Raleigh—Talbot's Wives—Titles conferred upon him by Henry VI.

CHAP. I.

THE glories of the early part of the reign of Henry VI. afford a striking contrast to its lamentable conclusion. The baby brow of the young king was decked with two crowns. The sword of his gallant uncle, the Duke of Bedford, hewed its splendid path through the fields of France, crimsoned with the blood of those who ventured to oppose themselves to English sway. His throne was surrounded by a band of heroes, yielding not in valour or in fortune to the most renowned paladins who ever shone upon the dazzling page of chivalry. A Warwick, a Salisbury, a Talbot, a Clifford, a Fastolf, fought under his banners: bright luminaries, whose daring exploits were emulated by every noble knight and soldier in his service. Until the fatal siege of Orleans every march of the English troops led them to victory. Before Crevant, in 1423, the second year of Henry's reign, the Earl of Salisbury defeated an army assembled by Charles VII. with great slaughter and the capture of many prisoners of note. Again in the following year another important victory rewarded the English arms. Assisted by his faithful allies the Scots, Charles sent eighteen thousand men into the field, and Bedford with an

inferior force advanced to meet them on the plains of Vernueil. Seated on a bay courser, in the centre of his host, "under a banner curiously beten with his arms,"* the duke animated his soldiers by a spirited address, and shouting their war-cry, "St. George! a Bedford! a Bedford!" they rushed upon the foe, who amazed by the startling acclamations and the fury of the onset, quailed for a moment beneath the shock, but recovering from their panic, answered with "Montjoy!" and "St. Denis!" and the field was obstinately contested. The military talents of the English commander and the steady discipline of his troops prevailed. The baggage, the pages, the horses, and the ineffective persons attached to the army, were placed by the order of the Duke of Bedford behind the men at arms, protected by a guard of two thousand archers. The French directed the Lombards in their service to attack the rear; but finding it stoutly defended, these mercenary soldiers seized the plunder within their reach and fled. Intent upon securing their booty they quitted the field without returning to the charge, and the archers immediately joined the main body, and by this opportune reinforcement spread confusion and death throughout the French ranks, unable to maintain the combat against the fresh assailants who poured down upon them with irresistible impetuosity. Eleven thousand of the enemy fell in this engagement, which was designated by the English parliament as the "grettest dede doon by Englishmen in our dayes, save the battaile of Agyncourte."† The Duke of Touraine, the

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* Hall.

† Parliament Rolls.

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Charles VII. reduced to a most humiliating state by the defeat of his army, was compelled to shut himself up, weak and inactive, in a city of little note; and his authority extended to so short a distance beyond the walls, that the English styled him, in scorn, "The king of Bourges." The feud which

* Hall. † Sloane's MSS. 1776.

broke out between the Dukes of Gloucester and Burgundy, respecting the dominions of Jacqueline of Hainault, gave the monarch breathing time; and the achievements of the English from this period, confined to the capture of castles and to skirmishes of trifling importance to either nation, were only productive of glory to the gallant individuals who signalized themselves upon these occasions. The desultory warfare carried on by stratagem, by desperate assaults, by bold sallies and prompt surprizes, has all the air of a romance. No enterprize was too difficult or too dangerous for the invincible spirits of the English captains. Salisbury, Warwick, Talbot, and Fastolf, vied with each other in deeds of knightly heroism; they carried fire and sword into the heart of every fortress which they approached, enriched themselves with the treasures of the fair and fertile country apparently delivered up for a prey and a spoil, and struck consternation into the hearts of the common people by the universal terror inspired by their names. Charles VII. and his partizans fled before their destroying swords to the distant bank of the Loire, and the lions of England, planted by her hardy sons upon battlement, tower and citadel, floated in proud triumph through the conquered realm. CHAP. I

Although the military talents of the Earl of Salisbury gave him precedence as a leader over every other general, with the exception of the Duke of Bedford, Richard Beauchamp the chivalrous Earl of Warwick lives in the historic page second to none of his gallant associates. To the animated record of

CHAP. I. a writer,* who flourished in the reigns of Edward IV. and Richard III. posterity is indebted for a detailed account of this hero's life, the original MS., embellished with illuminations valuable for their spirit and truth is preserved in the British Museum, and a faithful narrative of the earl's achievements copied from this authority is to be found in Dugdale's Warwickshire. Richard Beauchamp was born in 1381, and his christening was honoured by the presence of a crowned head, Richard II. performing the office of god-father, attended by Richard Scroope, Bishop of Coventry and Litchfield. Upon the banishment and attainder of his father, at the period in which the wrath of the revengeful monarch burst upon the devoted heads of Gloucester's confederates, he was committed to the guardianship of Thomas Holand, Duke of Surrey, the near relative and favourite of the king, who by a royal grant obtained possession of a suit of arras hangings containing the story of the famous Guy Earl of Warwick, an heir-loom in the family of the exiled earl, "which hard measure," says Dugdale, occasioned Catherine, a nun of Shouldham and a kinswoman, being the daughter of an elder brother of the house, who died without leaving male issue, to petition the king for a restoration of property inestimable to the descendants of that legendary chief, whose marvellous exploits inspired so many Earls of Warwick with the desire to equal or eclipse his renown. The accession of Henry of Lancaster to the English throne removed the cloud which had darkened the youthful days of Richard Beauchamp. By the death of his father

* Rous.

he became invested with the family titles and estates, and entered upon his brilliant career of arms at a tournament in honour of the coronation of Jane of Navarre, consort of Henry IV. where he kept the jousts upon the queen's part "against all commers, in which action," says his historian, "he behaved himself most nobly." During the campaign against Owen Glendor the earl distinguished himself by many gallant deeds; he had the honour of seizing the banner of the Welch leader and putting him to flight, and at the revolt of the Percies he followed the king to the field of Shrewsbury, and added fresh lustre to his name by a display of intrepid valour worthy of the antagonist of Hotspur and of Douglas. A reception into the brotherhood of the Garter rewarded these services; and already famous throughout the Christian world, Warwick, equally celebrated for his piety as for his courtesy and courage, obtained leave from the king to pay his vows at the holy sepulchre. Upon quitting England the earl visited his cousin the Duke of Barr, where he was nobly entertained for the space of eight days, "being," says Rous, "full lovingly and worshipfully refreshed," and thence accompanied by his kinsman he journeyed to Paris, where he also experienced a very flattering reception. The King of France, who in honour of the holy feast then celebrating, appeared at the banquet on Whitsunday, crowned, invited the English knight to dine at his own table, and the earl at this solemnity, "so famously behaved himself, in language and nurture, that the king and his lords with all other people gave him great laud," and at his departure Charles evinced his high esteem of the

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CHAP. I. noble qualities of his guest, by appointing a herald to conduct him in safety through the realm.

New honours awaited the earl in Lombardy, a second herald dispatched to meet him, presented a letter from Sir Pandolph Malacet, challenging him to perform certain feats of arms for the order of the Garter at Verona, before Sir Galeot of Mantua. Warwick gladly embraced the opportunity of upholding his country's glory and the honourable order which his sovereign had conferred upon him; but restrained his martial ardour until after the performance of a pilgrimage to Rome, whence he repaired to Verona, where the rumour of the tilt had drawn together an immense multitude anxious to behold this popular exercise. The knights agreed to fight with axes after the joust, then with arming swords, and lastly with sharp daggers. Sir Pandolph entered the field with nine spears borne before him. In the first encounter neither party sustained defeat, but in the attack with axes, Warwick wounded his antagonist severely in the shoulder, "and the Italian," says Rous, "would have been utterly slain had not Sir Galeot cried: 'Peace.'" The fame of this exploit travelled before the earl to Venice, where the duke and his nobles vied with each other in acts of courtesy towards the accomplished English knight, whom they loaded with valuable presents. In Asia, at that period the seat of arts and arms, the illustrious pilgrim was treated with the deference due to his rank and talents. The patriarch's deputy received him with much respect, and having made his offerings at the Saviour's hallowed shrine, he placed his armorial bearings upon the north wall of the

Temple, which we are informed "continued many years after, by the relation of divers pilgrims who came from thence." The Soldan's Lieutenant, styled by Rous, Sir Baltredam, having heard that the earl was a descendant of the famous Sir Guy of Warwick, whose history the natives of the east possessed in books of their own language, invited the warrior boasting so renowned an ancestor to his palace, where after feasting him royally, he presented his visitor with three precious stones of great value, and divers cloths of gold and silks, as guerdons for his servants. In this hour of social intercourse the historian gravely informs us, that the supposed infidel confessed a belief in the Christian religion, which however from the dread of the danger which he must incur in its discovery, he was obliged to conceal; and to prove the truth of his assertion respecting his secret opinions, "he rehearsed the creed." The Earl of Warwick returned the civilities of the Soldan's Lieutenant by giving a banquet to his servants, and sending them away with rich gifts of scarlet and other English cloths. Sir Baltredam, charmed with the stranger's gracious courtesy, honoured him with another visit, saying that he would wear his livery and be marshal of his hall; whereupon the earl, who was never outdone in politeness, presented him with a gown of black puke furred, after which they had much discourse together, "he, Sir Baltredam, being skilful in sundry languages." From Jerusalem Richard Beauchamp returned to Venice, where his second reception was not inferior to the first. From that city he travelled into Russia, Lithuania, Poland, Prussia, Westphalia, and also some coun- CHAP. I.

CHAP. I. tries in Germany, "showing great valour in divers tournaments."

Upon the earl's return to England an especial mark of royal favour awaited him. By an indenture bearing date the second of October in the twelfth year of Henry IV., he was retained to serve the Prince of Wales as well in peace as in war, both in the realm of England upon and beyond the seas, for which service he was to receive the sum of two hundred and fifty marks yearly, to be paid out of the exchequer of the prince by even portions at Easter and Michaelmas. And it was likewise stipulated that when he should be in the court of the said prince, he should be allowed the attendance of four esquires and six grooms, "and dyet for them all," provided that the said prince should share a third of his spoils in battle, and the third of the thirds obtained by those who fought under his banners: also, if he should capture any great commander, fort, or castle, they were to be delivered up to the prince upon a reasonable satisfaction for the same. "Nay," observes our author,* "the earl stood so high in the esteem of that heroic prince, Henry V., that against his coronation he was, for his wisdom and industry, as the words of the charter import, constituted High Steward of England for that solemnity."

In the second year of the new monarch's reign the Earl of Warwick displayed his zeal in the faith which he professed, and in the service of the king his master, by engaging actively against the Lollards. In the following year he was appointed to the com-

* Dugdale.

mand of Calais, with a guard of twenty-six men-at-arms, and three knights mounted, thirty archers on horseback, and four hundred archers and private soldiers on foot, all of his own retinue, besides ten men-at-arms, and ten archers on horse-back belonging to the Treasurer of Calais, and ten cross-bowmen, twenty carpenters, five masons, with others maintained at the king's charge. These forces were to receive considerable augmentation in time of war. CHAP. II

The earl attended the grand council held at Constance in 1415, accompanied by the Bishops of Salisbury, Coventry and Litchfield, Bath and Wells, Norwich, Hereford, and St. David's, the Abbot of Westminster, the Prior of Worcester, with divers other learned persons, and a train of eight hundred horsemen. Again the fame of the earl's achievements rang throughout the christian world; during the congress he received a challenge from a foreign nobleman, styled by Rous "a great duke," to tilt "for his lady's sake," and in this fierce, and according to modern ideas barbarous encounter, Warwick slew his adversary, an exploit which it would appear was highly gratifying to the empress who witnessed the sanguinary deed; and charmed with the earl's superior skill and bravery took his livery of the bear from the shoulder of one of his knights, with the intention of wearing it "for great favour" on her own person. Warwick being informed of this act of gracious condescension, directed that the badge so honoured should be made of pearls and precious stones, and presenting this splendid gem to his imperial patroness, it was, we are told, received

CHAP. I. "with much respect." Sigismund also distinguished the Earl of Warwick with the most flattering marks of esteem; the emperor gave him his sword to bear, and offered to send by his hands a very precious relic to England, the heart of St. George its tutelary saint. Warwick gratefully undertook the commission, but on hearing that the Emperor intended to visit England in person he restored the gift to him, saying, with his usual grace, that "the delivery thereof by his own hand would be more acceptable." Sigismund shortly afterwards set forward upon his journey, and at his arrival at the English court received the Order of the Garter, an appropriate compliment from Henry, and in the character of a Knight of St. George offered the holy heart at Windsor. As the emperor travelled to and from England he was "royally entertained" at Calais by its chivalric and magnificent commander; his "comportment," we are informed by the historian, "being such" that his illustrious guest told the King of England "that no christian prince had such another knight for wisdom, nurture, and manhood;" adding, that if all courtesy were lost, yet might it be found again in him; insomuch, ever after by the same emperor's authority, he was called the "Father of Courtesie."

Ever anxious to signalize himself in feats of arms, the earl during his sojourn at Calais, meditated the performance of some "*new point* in chivalry;" and, in pursuance of this design, directed that three pavices (shields) should be painted, and in each pavice a lady; "the first harping at the end of a bedstead, with a grete of gold on her left sleeve, and her knight

called the Green Knight, with a black quarter; he should be ready to joust with any knight of France; twelve courses, and two shields should be provided; and that knight's letter was sealed with his arms, the field silver. The second pavice had a lady sitting at a covered board, working pearls; and on her sleeve was attached a glove of plate (silver); and her knight was called "Chevalier Vert," and his letter was sealed with the arms, the field silver, and two bars of gules; and he must joust fifteen courses, and there should be two saddles of choyes. The third pavice, a lady sitting in a garden, making a chaplet, and on her sleeve a poleyn with a rivet. Her knight was called Chevalier Attendant, and he and his fellow must run and course with sharp spears, and without shields. His letter was sealed with gold, and gules quarter, a border of verd." CHAP. I.

These missives were sent to Charles VI. and his court, and the invitation was accepted by three French knights, who assembled on a lawn called the park hedge of Guynes. On the appointed day Warwick entered the field mounted on a courser trapped with the arms of one of his ancestors, a large plume, or as Rous expresses it, a bush of ostrich feathers on his helmet, and his vizor closed. At the third course he cast his antagonist, called Chevalier Rouge, to the ground, at his spear's point behind the horse-tail, and then, still maintaining his incognito, he rode unknown to his pavilion and forthwith sent "a fair courser" to the discomfited knight. The next day the gallant earl appeared again upon the field with his vizor closed, a chaplet on his basnet, surmounted by a tuft of ostrich

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feathers, and his charger trapped with his arms of silver and two bars of gules. He encountered Sir Hugh Lawny, called the Blanc Knight, smote this new champion on the vizor thrice, broke his harness, and returning to his pavilion again victorious and unknown paid the same compliment to his second opponent which he had offered to the first, by sending him "a good courser." Upon the third day Warwick rode to the field with his face uncovered, and his name and rank disclosed: the chaplet on the basnet which he had worn the preceding morning was upon this occasion rich with pearl and precious stones, and he said that "like as he had in his own person performed the two days before, so he would the third." Another triumph crowned the arms of a knight worthy of a seat amid the far famed heroes of King Arthur's board. At every stroke of his spear he bowed Sir Coland Fynes, the chevalier who advanced to meet him, down to his horse's back. The Frenchman being unable to bend the earl from his proud seat, exclaimed that he was bound to the saddle, an accusation which Warwick instantly refuted by alighting from his steed, and remounting with equal ease. The victor rode to his pavilion amidst the acclamations of the people, whence he dispatched "a good courser" to the third knight who had sustained defeat from his powerful arm; and having feasted the spectators and presented rich gifts to the vanquished, he "rode with great worship to Calais."

The earl in crossing the sea upon his return from the seat of his government, captured two large carracks, and shortly afterwards attended the Duke

of Clarence into France, with whom he performed many gallant actions. At the siege of Caen he was the first person who mounted the breach, pressing eagerly forwards, he shouted "a Clarence! a Clarence!" and planting the English banner upon the walls, the town thus valiantly assaulted surrendered to the Duke. Warwick also won Mount St. Michael, and as a reward for these signal services the king created him Earl of Aumerle, and at the siege of Rouen permitted him to erect his tent next to the royal pavilion. CHAP. I.

Henry at his death manifested the estimation in which he held the Earl of Warwick, and his entire confidence in his wisdom, by appointing him in his will the tutor of his only child; the dying monarch doubtless trusted that under so renowned a warrior his infant heir would be early trained to deeds of arms and feats of chivalry, but Warwick though so capable of teaching his pupil every martial and knightly exercise, chose rather to adopt the suggestions of the council and to quench the first sparks of a generous spirit which flamed up in the breast of the youthful king. He applied for an extension of his power and authority, and for permission to use coercive measures in support of his commands:* his request was granted, and Henry though represented at the age of ten years "as grown in years, in stature of his person and in conceit and knowledge of his high authority," and giving his attendants reason to suppose that he would "more and more gruge with chastising and lothe it,"† yet emerged from the tutelage of the most accomplished hero of the age,

* Parliament Rolls. † Fenn.

CHAP. I. a cowed and lowly-minded anchoret, more fitted for a hermitage than a throne, meek, amiable, and pious, but destitute of every qualification requisite for the government of those hardy spirits with whom he was surrounded.

At the death of the Duke of Bedford Warwick succeeded that illustrious prince in the command in France. Nothing could surpass the splendour of the appointments which he prepared for this honourable mission. He was attended by a particular officer at arms called Warwick herald, who received a grant from him of an annuity of ten marks sterling. "The state and lustre of the earl's equipage," says Dugdale, "may in some sort be discerned by his painter's bill." This curious document which the diligent antiquary has preserved in his History of Warwickshire, gives a description and the price of the several gorgeous articles which it enumerates; among the items are, "One coat for my lord's body beat with fine gold. Two pavices for my lord, the one with a griffin standing on my lord's colour, red, white, and russet, the other painted with black and a ragged staff beat with silver occupying all the field. Two coats for heralds beat with demmy gold. Four banners for trumpets beat with demmy gold. A great streamer for a ship, forty yards in length and eight in breadth, with a great bear and griffin holding a ragged staff, poudred full of ragged staffs. Three pennons of satten entertailed with ragged staffs, besides standards, spear-shafts, coat-armor, &c. &c. Upon the passage to France the earl was exposed to imminent danger from the fury of a

tempest, apprehending the total loss of the ship he bound himself with his wife and son to the mainmast, in order that in the event of their perishing at sea, and their bodies being found, their name and rank might be discovered by "his cote of arms," and fitting burial afforded to the partners of his misfortune. CHAP. I.

The earl survived his command in France only four years, his corpse was brought to England and interred with great magnificence at Warwick, his monument being one of the most splendid of the sepulchral remains which time and the more destructive hand of man has spared to our ancient churches; and it is particularly curious on account of an inscription, which instead of being pointed in the usual manner, has in place of commas or other stops, the bear and the ragged staff, the famous badges of the family, inserted to mark the different pauses in each sentence. Amid the legacies of this potent earl are an image of our lady of pure gold to the collegiate church at Warwick; four images of gold to be made "like unto himself in his coat of arms, holding an anker betwixt his hands," to be offered in his name at the shrines of four churches. To Isabel, his second wife, he gave "all the silver vessels, bedding, and household stuff that he had with her, and over and above all that, and whatsoever else she had since her marriage, two dozen of silver dishes, twelve chargers of silver, twelve saucers of silver, a pair of basins covered, silver and gilt, four other basins of silver of one sort, with his arms enameled on the bottom of them. Likewise the great paytren bought of the Countess of

CHAP. I. Suffolk, sometime belonging to the Earl of Salisbury, and to his son Henry, the cup of gold with the dance of men and women." Warwick manifested his anxiety respecting his welfare in a future state, by desiring that first, and in all possible haste after his decease, there should be said five thousand masses for his soul, and deeply impressed with the illusive conviction of the continual supremacy of the Roman Catholic faith in England, directed also that three masses should be sung every day for his soul's repose, "as long as the world might endure." A confident provision for futurity not uncommon in the wills of this age, in which we read of sums of money appropriated for masses, "to be sung for ever."

Thomas Montacute, the celebrated commander in the French wars, was the eldest son of John Montacute, Earl of Salisbury, beheaded for his attempt to replace Richard II. upon the throne: although by the generosity of Henry IV. he became repossessed of a part of the confiscated estates seized by the crown at the failure of that unfortunate enterprize, it does not appear that he was ever formally restored to the title forfeited upon his father's attainder.* In the parliament held in the second year of the reign of Henry V., he endeavoured to obtain a reversal of the judgment pronounced against the late Earl, but was unsuccessful, and Dugdale in making mention of his will, says, that he "styled himself Earl of Salisbury." The title seems always to have been granted to this gallant soldier by courtesy, but at his death his honours were conferred upon the husband of his

* Dugdale.

only daughter; a Nevill, son of the Earl of Westmore- CHAP. I.
land; to the exclusion of the next male heir of the family who vainly strove to assert his right to the earldom.* Henry V. early appreciated Salisbury's heroic qualities; in the fourth year of his reign he retained him by indenture in his service, and rewarded his valorous conduct at the siege of Caen by a grant to himself and to the heirs male of his body, of the castle and lordship of Danvillers, and all other castles, lands, and lordships of Sir Thomas Tournebu, knight. Salisbury also received a grant of the earldom of Perch in Normandy, from the same munificent hand, part of the possessions of Sir Lewis de Longny, knight, paying yearly to the king, his heirs and successors, "two ousles at the castle of Roan on the first day of August." After the death of Henry, the splendour of whose fame eclipsed that of all his contemporaries, Salisbury's deeds acquired a brighter and more dazzling lustre; so high was his reputation, that when a strong body of French soldiers attacked a town garrisoned only by six hundred men, the besieged being hardly pressed made a bold sally, shouting St. George! a Salisbury! and the foe supposing that the gallant earl had in reality flown to the rescue of the fortress, instantly abandoned the enterprize, and flinging down their weapons in despair, betook themselves to flight, leaving their camp equipage, ordnance, military stores, and some treasure behind them.

The harmony which had so happily existed between the Burgundians and the English, was threatened with disturbance from the displeasure excited

* Dugdale.

CHAP. I. in the breast of the Earl of Salisbury by the too pointed attentions which the Duke of Burgundy offered to the countess his wife. During a splendid feast held at Paris, and celebrated with banquets, dances, and jousts, at which we are told by Stow, "the Duchess of Bedford was holden for the most gallantest lady of all others, and with her the Countess of Salisbury, a very fayre lady;" the Duke of Burgundy who is described as being particularly handsome, courteous, accomplished in every manly exercise, and surpassing all his countrymen in the tilt and in the dance, became enamoured of the beautiful Englishwoman, and declared his passion in letters and messages which were not unanswered. The Earl of Salisbury being informed of this correspondence, conceived an unextinguishable hatred to the Duke of Burgundy, and lost no opportunity of displaying his just resentment. The date of this feast, 1424, assures us that it was the earl's second wife, to whom his affectionate remembrances in his will sufficiently evince his attachment, who was the object of Burgundy's libertine pursuit. The queen dowager of France was present at the festivities which terminated so unfortunately, and the Duke of Bedford, who never had engaged in the joust before, entered the lists in honour of the occasion, and tilted with other princes and knights.* Upon the authority of Andrews, we learn that Salisbury quitted France in great displeasure after this affront, and could only be induced to return by a command of higher authority, and a considerable increase of pecuniary emolument.

* Monstrelet and Stow.

The earl's brilliant career now drew speedily to its close. Hall attributes the disastrous attack upon Orleans to this intrepid warrior's urgent advice and solicitation; admirably adapted by his genius and valour for the achievement of extraordinary deeds, no fortress however strong was deemed impregnable by his adventurous spirit, and the success which had attended his most daring actions won the entire confidence of the council and the army; his measures were approved by the one, and eager multitudes crowded to his banner, despite of the difficulties and dangers with which its perilous position might be surrounded. While Salisbury lived to spread confusion and death over a country desolated by his prowess, it was a saying among the exasperated and despairing foe, that "the Almighty had turned English, and the devil would not help France." With the rash hardihood with which in the wars of the middle ages those commanders whose lives were the most valuable to their country rushed into danger, the earl having taken the Tourelles, a fortress erected upon the bridge of the city of Orleans, ventured with some of his captains into the ruins in order to survey the preparations made by the besieged for their defence, and in this exposed situation received a death wound from a cannon ball, fired we are told by Stow, by the son of the master gunner of the city, but in the diary of the siege of Orleans, it is ascribed to a superior hand. "The earl," observes the writer, "was struck by a ball reported to have been fired from a tower called the Tower of our Lady, but never positively known from whence discharged, so that it is said to have been the act of the

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CHAP. I. divinity." The mischief wrought by these newly invented engines struck terror into the hearts of soldiers unaccustomed to weapons which were more fearful if not more destructive than those which had preceded them; death by a ball or bullet was deemed peculiarly horrible. Camden informs us that the Earl of Salisbury was "the first English gentleman ever slain thereby;" and adds, "Albeit now he is thought the most unfortunate, and cursed in his mother's wombe, who dyeth by great shot." According to Monstrelet, this lamentable fate had previously befallen a young knight, the son of Sir John Cornwall, and cousin german to king Henry V. who was killed by a cannon ball at the siege of Meaux, to the great sorrow of the monarch and his friends.

From the date of the death of the Earl of Salisbury, the prosperity of the English in France declined without intermission.

In military skill he was without an equal, and the courage of Talbot and other brave soldiers availed not after the loss of this experienced leader. Fabian in speaking of the earl's fall, observes, "This, after divers writers was *inicium malorii*, for, after this myshap the Englyshmen lost rather than won, so that lytell and lytell, they loste all they'r possessions in France, and albeit, some what they got after, yet for one that they wonne, they lost three, as after shall appear."

No will of the fifteenth century however prodigal in charitable bequests, displays more genuine benevolence than that of the Earl of Salisbury; it is also deeply imbued with the opinions of the age respect-

ing the efficacy of prayers offered for the dead, and distinguished by peculiar expressions of tenderness towards the beloved partner of his honours and his wealth. In this interesting record, the earl directs that in whatsoever part of the world he should die, his body should be buried at Bustlesham in England, and that the funeral obsequies should be performed in a simple, unostentatious manner, without any expensive entertainment, "or any large and sumptuous lights for worldly pomp," but that when his corse should be carried through any of the cities or towns of England to its last resting place, four torches only should be lighted at its entrance, and "borne therewith:" he farther directs twenty-four torches to be borne by the same number of poor men, all clothed alike, with four other torches to be placed around his corse on the day of his funeral; also that to every "poor body" coming to these exequies, four-pence a piece should be given by the hands of his executors for the health of his soul; fifty poor people being first chosen out of the whole assembly, to whom his beloved wife should, with her own hands, give twenty-pence each. To the monastery of Bustlesham the earl bequeaths one hundred pounds sterling out of his moveable goods, for the celebration of one mass every day for his soul's repose, to be specially ordained by the prior and the whole convent there, in a peculiar place appointed for the purpose, with this collect, *Deus cui proprium*, and that two canons of that house immediately after the conclusion of the mass of the blessed virgin, should "forever say" before his tomb, the psalm of *de profundis*, the Lord's prayer, the angelical

CHAP. I. salutation, and three other prayers which he names. He likewise directs that his most beloved wife should, as soon as possible after his death, cause five thousand masses to be specially celebrated for his soul, and the souls of all the "faithful deceased," besides three other masses to be sung daily for his soul during the term of her life, in such places as she and his executors should think fit, within the realm of England, and if possible to be solemnized in her presence. The earl also charges his wife and his executors "to cause with all good speed," three thousand masses to be celebrated for the souls of all the companions of the order of St. George, "in recompence of those masses which had been by him forgotten."

He desires that his executors should send three poor people every day, if they could be found, to the Lady Alice his wife, in order that she might serve them with her own hands, with "one mess of meat, one loaf, and one quart of drink;" and that his wife and his executors should within one year of his decease, cause a thousand marks to be distributed amongst poor people, partly in money, and partly in raiment, both linen and woollen. The earl directs that a chantry should be raised to the honour of the blessed Virgin over his monument, which should be divided into three separate compartments, that in the centre half a foot higher than the other two, for his own body; the body of the Lady Alianore, daughter of Thomas Earl of Kent, some time his wife, on the one side, with the body of the Lady Alice, his present wife, then living, on the other, "if she would." This lady, so celebrated for her beauty,

has in modern days been more distinguished on account of her descent from her illustrious grandfather, Chaucer, the founder of English poetry, than for the rank which she acquired by her union with two potent nobles; she was married first to Sir John Phillips, knight, secondly to the Earl of Salisbury, and about two years after that hero's death, obtained licence to enter the holy pale a third time, with William de la Pole, who, falling by the hand of violence she also survived. CHAP. I.

The affectionate wish expressed by the Earl of Salisbury that his second and most beloved wife should at her decease occupy the vacant space beside him in his tomb was not gratified. The lady was buried under a superb monument at Ewelme, and her effigy, one of three instances in which the garter belonging to the illustrious order of knighthood founded by Edward III. appears as a feminine ornament, has given rise to a supposition that so distinguished a mark of royal favour was sometimes conferred upon the gentler sex. It is certain that when the order of the garter was first instituted, the ladies were invited to assist at the splendid ceremonial performed at the installation of the knights, and that subsequently upon the festivals of St. George, the patron of the order, robes and hoods similar to those worn by the knights were assigned by the donation of the sovereign to the queen, the wives of the companions of the order, and other great ladies. Anstis informs us that the first record of these gifts occurs in the seventh year of the reign of Richard II., when the queen, the Princess Joan, mother of the sovereign, the Duchess of Lancaster, the Countesses

CHAP. I. of Cambridge, Buckingham, Pembroke, Oxford and Salisbury, and the ladies Philippa and Catherine, daughters of the Duke of Lancaster, had robes and hoods provided for them made of violet-coloured cloth, the former lined with fur, and the latter with scarlet, and both embroidered over with small garters worked in silk and gold plate, in each of which the motto neatly wrought appeared, the exact counterparts of the robes worn by the knights companions in that year. Grants to the same effect were issued in the eleventh, thirteenth and nineteenth years of Richard II.; in the first mentioned the robes were white, in the second sanguine, and in the third blue. The ladies continued to wear the costume of the order, and to assist at the festivals during the reigns of Henry V., Henry VI., Edward IV. and Henry VII. In the sixteenth year of Edward IV. the queen, her daughter the Princess Elizabeth, and the Duchess of Suffolk the king's sister, were attired at the feast of St. George in murrey-coloured gowns, the livery of the house of York, embroidered with garters: and Skelton, the poet laureate of Henry VII., records the presence of the ladies of the royal family at the feast of the garter in these words:

> "O knightly ordere clothed in robe of gartere,
> The queen's grace and thy mother clothed in the same."

That the ladies did not derive the privilege of wearing the robes of the order in right of their husbands, is evident from the circumstance of the two unmarried daughters of John of Ghent, and at a later period the Princess Elizabeth in the reign of

Edward IV., having appeared in these stately appen- CHAP. I.
dages of knighthood. Anstis informs us that the queen performed the same ceremonials at the offering at the high mass at Windsor as the king, and that the ladies who received the order were styled *Dames de la Fraternité de St George, et Dominee de Se Ctâ et liberaturâ Garter*, which are the same epithets as are given to the knights, and that their habits were delivered them annually by warrants from the crown in the like manner as the knights received them, and that the robes worn by the ladies were distinguished by the number of garters embroidered upon them according to the rank which each held; a duchess being entitled to an equal number with a duke, and so on through the different degrees.* "I must confess my ignorance," continues our author, "whether these ladies were heretofore nominated by the sole pleasure of the crown, or chosen by any sort of election, whether any ceremonies were performed at their admission, or whether they were under obligations to observe any rules or statutes peculiar to them."

The monument of the Duchess of Suffolk affords evidence that the ladies were privileged to wear the garter as well as the robes of the most celebrated order of knighthood in christendom; the lady is represented with the badge loosely fastened round the

* The number of garters allowed to the different ranks of the nobility upon their robes were as follows:

A Duke - - -	120
A Marquis - - -	110
A Viscount - - -	100
A Baron - - - -	80

CHAP. I. left arm like a bracelet. The effigy of the Lady Harcourt, wife of Sir Robert Harcourt, Knight of the Garter, who died in the year 1472, is likewise decorated with a similar ornament; but with this difference, that the latter wears the garter above the elbow, in fashion of an armlet. The ladies in later times neglected their ancient privileges, and the custom dropped until the reign of Charles I., in which some attempt was made to revive the old observances. Ashmole tells us, that "after a long disuse of these robes by the queens of England and knight companions' ladies, there was at the feast of St. George celebrated in 14 Car. I. endeavour used to have them restored, for the then deputy chancellor moved the sovereign in chapter that the ladies of the knight companions might have the privilege to wear a garter of the order about their arms, and on upper robes at festival times, according to ancient usage. Upon which motion the sovereign gave orders that the queen should be acquainted therewith, and her pleasure known, and the affair left to the ladies' particular suit. The queen's answer was delivered the following year, and a chapter ordered to be held, but the civil wars broke out and the matter wholly slept."

The brave Talbot, who though destined to see that fair kingdom lost which his stout arm had helped to win, yet bent his grey hairs gloriously upon the battle-field against a foreign enemy, and was thus spared the misery of witnessing the desolating progress of civil dissension in England, stands amid the heroes of Henry's wars in France next in rank to the Earl of Salisbury. Descended from an an-

cient family he married Maud, eldest of the two daughters and co-heirs of Sir Thomas Nevill, by Joan his wife, sole daughter and heir to William Lord Furnivall, and was first summoned to parliament in the eleventh year of the reign of Henry IV. In the commencement of the succeeding reign he was arrested for some offence not known by the historian who relates the circumstance,* and committed to the Tower of London, but was speedily released and restored to the favour of the sovereign, by whom in the following February he was appointed to the Lieutenancy of Ireland. During Talbot's command in that country he defeated and took prisoner Donat Mac Murghe, designated by Dugdale as "a great rebel," and being summoned to attend the king into Normandy, he brought his captive with him to England for the better security of his person, and lodged him in the Tower of London. The king shortly afterwards delivered the Irish chief into his conqueror's hands, in order that "he might make the best advantage of him," a mode of acquiring riches conformable to the usages of the time.

CHAP. I.

Nov. 16. 1413.

Talbot owed the dazzling reputation which he obtained in the wars in France solely to his own reckless valour and strength of arm: of Salisbury it was said, that "while he lived the Duke of Bedford might enjoy his leisure;" but although at the head of England's chivalry, conspicuous in every battle, and continually performing some gallant achievement, which filled the christian world with wonder and admiration, Talbot did not possess the talents requisite for the command and conduct of an army;

* Dugdale.

CHAP. I. and the splendid services which raised him in the twentieth year of the reign of Henry VI. to the dignity of Earl of Shrewsbury, were rather flattering to his country's pride than productive of any material advantage to the English crown.

Talbot's name has already appeared on these pages connected with every event of importance occurring in the war with France. No man ever inspired a higher degree of respect in the breasts of the knightly ranks of his opponents, or struck deeper consternation into the hearts of the populace. Hall, who in his quaint manner bears testimony of the extraordinary estimation in which the earl was held, says, "This man was to the French people a very scorge and a daily terror, insomuch that as his person was fearfull and terrible to his adversaries present, so his name and fame was spitefull and dreadful to the common people absent, in so much that women in Fraunce to fear their young children would crye 'the Talbot commeth! the Talbot commeth!'" When at length the tide of fortune turned against the English, Talbot was taken prisoner at the field of Patay and led into the presence of the King of France: he was received with the respect due to his valour. Saintrailles, one of the band of heroes who clung to their king in his severest distress, and by their devoted constancy to the best interests of France, preserved it from chains and slavery, with the generosity inherent in all noble minds, prevailed upon his sovereign to liberate the brave English captain without a ransom; an act of chivalrous courtesy which Talbot had the good fortune to be enabled to return.

During the vicissitudes of war, occurring in the long interval which elapsed before the final expulsion of the English, Saintrailles fell into the hands of a victor who retained a grateful remembrance of the French knight's honourable conduct. Monstrelet tells us that Charles VII. notwithstanding that Talbot had fought against France for the space of four and twenty years, evinced the high esteem which he felt for this intrepid warrior's character by presenting him with rich gifts in gold, silver, and horses, when he heard that the earl intended to visit Rome in the Jubilee year, namely 1450. CHAP. I.

A brilliant ray illumined the close of Talbot's eventful life. Invited to renew the war upon the continent by the people of Guienne, he achieved a series of rapid conquests worthy of the brightest period of England's heroism. Henry's standard, borne by the veteran soldier, was re-erected in the province so long one of the most precious jewels in the English crown; but its triumph was of short duration. The force under Talbot, though united to that of his valiant son, the Lord Lisle, was inadequate to contend with the powerful army which Charles VII. sent into the field.

The French had become extremely expert in the management of their artillery. Talbot, who found himself opposed to three hundred pieces of ordnance which discharged their ponderous ammunition with fearful havoc amongst his soldiers, could not as heretofore engage hand to hand with the stoutest of his adversaries, and carve with his own sword a passage for his followers: his horse was killed under him, his leg shattered by a bullet, and lying dis-

CHAP. I. abled on the field, he was dispatched by the bayonets of the enemy, after his gallant son had sacrificed his own life in the vain attempt to bear the wounded body of his venerable parent from the fatal spot. The cold remains of the veteran hero, sought after by a herald who had followed his glorious fortunes for nearly half a century, were discovered amidst ghastly piles of the dead. Weeping and embracing the corse, this faithful servant exclaimed, "Alas, my lord, and is it you! I pray God pardon all your misdoings! I have been your officer of arms forty years and more; it is time that I should surrender to you the ensigns of my office." Then, the tears still flowing from his eyes, he spread his coat of arms over the lifeless body, thus performing one of the ancient rites of sepulture.*

Fuller, in whose worthies the Earl of Shrewsbury has obtained a distinguished place, bursts forth into a glowing panegyric at the mention of his name, "This is that terrible Talbot, so famous for his sword, or rather whose sword was so famous for the arm that used it; a sword with bad Latin upon it, '*Sum Talboti pro vincere inimicos meos,*' but good steel within it, insomuch that the bare fame of his approach frighted the French from the siege of Bourdeaux." The same author quotes an interesting parallel drawn by the pen of Sir Walter Raleigh between Sir John Talbot, Lord Lisle, and Paulus Æmilius the Roman general, which it would be unjust to omit while commemorating the filial affection and unyielding valour of this gallant knight. "Æmilius was overpowered by the forces of Han-

* Andrews from Registre De Wyrksop apud Anstis.

nibal and Asdrubal to the loss of the day. The same sad success attended the two Talbots in fight against the French.—Cornelius Lentulus entreated Æmilius, sitting all bloodied upon a stone, to rise and save himself, offering his horse and other assistance.—The father advised the son by escape to reserve himself for future fortune.—Æmilius refused the proffer, adding withall, that he would not again come under the judgment of the people of Rome.—His son craved to be excused, and would not on any terms be persuaded to forsake his father.—In two considerables Talbot far surpassed Æmilius, for Æmilius was old, grievously, if not mortally wounded: our lord, in the flower of his youth, unhurt, easily able to escape; Æmilius accountable for the overthrow received: the other no ways answerable for that day's misfortune." CHAP. I.

The Earl of Shrewsbury married a second time in the seventeenth year of the reign of Henry VI. the eldest of the three daughters of Richard Beauchamp Earl of Warwick, by his first wife Elizabeth, the heiress of Thomas Lord Berkely, an amazon well fitted to contend for her alleged right to the titles and estates of the Berkelys, and whose exploits will be mentioned in their proper place. The earl became possessed of the lands and other property attached to the ancient family of the Talbots by the death of his niece, whose decease occurred nine years after the accession of Henry V. to the throne. Besides the riches which he acquired in common with the other commanders in the war, by the plunder of towns and fortresses and the ransom of prisoners, he obtained a grant from Edward Mortimer, Earl of

CHAP. I. March and Ulster, under whose banner he served, of an annual rent of an hundred pounds, as the reward of his extraordinary merit. The earl devoted a part of his wealth to the necessities of his sovereign Henry VI. who was indebted to this loyal servant in the sum of ten thousand four hundred and twenty-six pounds four shillings farthing, and who "in consideration of his great services, as well to King Henry V. his father as to himself, both in France and Normandy, granted that after the sum of twenty-one thousand pounds, wherein he stood indebted unto Henry, the Cardinal Bishop of Winchester, were paid, he should receive yearly four hundred marks out of the customs and duties issuing from the port of Kingston upon Hull."* Talbot's declining years were full of honour. He served the king a second time as his lieutenant in Ireland, and performed the duties of that high office with so much zeal and ability, that the grateful monarch added the Earldom of Waterford to the titles and dignities which he already possessed.

* Dugdale.

CHAPTER II.

Biographical Sketch of Sir John Fastolfe—unjustly represented as Shakspeare's coward Knight—Liberties taken with the Name of Sir John Oldcastle—Fastolfe's Claim to gentle blood—his early Services—is patronized by the Duke of Bedford—obtains several important Commands in France—is elected to the Order of the Garter—The Battle of Herrings—Fastolfe's conduct at Patay—Doubts respecting the Truth of Monstrelet's Report—Vindication of Fastolfe—his uninterrupted Favour with the Regent—subsequent Commands entrusted to him—Marks of Esteem accorded to him by the Duke of York—he retires to Caister—Aggressions of his Neighbours—Character of Sir John Fastolfe—his Letter to the Rector of Castlecombe—his Avarice—his Discontent—second Letter to Sir Thomas Howes—Lawless Conduct of the Judges—Fastolfe's Jeopardy with the Government—Letter of John Payn—martial Spirit of the venerable Warrior—Fastolfe's Illness and Death—his Funeral—his vast Possessions—Description of his Plate—his Tapestry Hangings—and other Furniture—Dearth of Books—State of the Knight's Cellars—Debts of the Crown—Tributes of Respect paid to Fastolfe by his Contemporaries—Panegyric from Yelverton—and of the Herald.

CHAP. II.

Sir John Fastolfe was one of the very few of those warriors trained under Henry V. who, living in peace throughout a considerable period of the eventful struggle of the adverse roses, attained a good old age, and died by the course of nature in the quietude of country retirement. The brightness of this hero's reputation has been tarnished by the unwarrantable freedom taken with his name, by a poet

CHAP. II. whose immortal pen stamps indelible disgrace upon every personage condemned to enact the coward, the tyrant, or the knave, in those exquisite dramas, whence many readers who turn away from the less delightful page of history, derive their ideas respecting the illustrious dead. The early poetic records which commemorate the wild sallies and dissolute courses of Henry of Monmouth, and which Shakspeare consulted when writing those inimitable comedies, wherein the freaks of the gay and thoughtless prince are so wittily represented, were the productions of Roman Catholic authors, who, anxious to load the memory of Sir John Oldcastle, Lord Cobham, the martyred disciple of Wickliffe, with infamy, gave a conspicuous place amid Henry's unprincipled companions, to the man who sacrificed his life in his zeal for his religion. The reverence with which protestant writers regarded this bold supporter of their faith prevented the farther profanation of his name, and Shakspeare, desirous to preserve the character so rudely and grossly drawn by his predecessors, is supposed to have inconsiderately adopted an appellation familiar in the reign of Henry IV. for the hoary libertine of Eastcheap.

The gallant knight thus fatally maligned boasted a descent from a family who flourished with honourable distinction in England before the Norman conquest. It appears from the authority of old writers, that the young Fastolfe being left a minor, became the ward of Thomas Mowbray Duke of Norfolk, and after the banishment of that unfortunate nobleman by Richard II. and the accession of Henry IV. to the throne, entered the service of Prince Thomas

of Lancaster Duke of Clarence, whom he accompanied to Ireland when serving the office of the king's lieutenant in that country. During his sojourn in the sister kingdom, Fastolfe enriched himself by a marriage with a lady of rank, the daughter of Lord Tibetot and widow of Sir Stephen Scroope, and upon the invasion of France by Henry V. commenced his career of arms as an esquire. Fastolfe obtained honourable celebrity at the battle of Azincourt, and assisted in the gallant defence of Harfleur, from the attack of the constable of France, which by the exertions of its brave garrison held out until the Duke of Bedford came to its relief. He was at the capture of all the castles, towns and places of note in Normandy, and won his golden spurs by the active part which he took in the conquest of that rich province. At or a short time previous to the death of Henry V., Sir John Fastolfe was appointed grand master of the Duke of Bedford's household and seneschal of Normandy, and having valiantly retaken the town of Meulent from the French was created a banneret, and constituted lieutenant for the king and regent in Normandy, in the jurisdictions of Rouen, Evreux, Alençon, and the countries beyond the river Seine, and in addition to this extensive command, he was made governor of Anjou and Maine. At the battle of Verneuil, Fastolfe took prisoner with his own hands, John II. Duke of Alençon, the son of the late duke, slain upon the field of Azincourt. CHAP. II.

Distinguishing himself in several successive actions with the enemy, from whom he wrested the strong fortress of St. Ouen Destrais, the castle of Gravelle,

CHAP. II.

and other important places, these indefatigable exertions were rewarded by his election "with," says the author of his memoirs, "extraordinary deference to his merits," to the knight companionship of the order of the garter, being adjudged by the Duke of Bedford to be even more worthy of that high honour than Sir John Radcliffe, who obtained an equal number of votes, and who, in the service of his sovereign, "had exercised arms for the space of twenty-eight years unreproached." Ample testimony is borne of the conduct as well as of the valour of Sir John Fastolfe, in a letter addressed to him in the king's name, notifying his election to the Order of the Garter, and in the royal commission for the installation of the newly-created knight. In the first, his good, honourable, and loyal services are mentioned with just praise, and in the second, he is commended for his "great sense, courage, and experience in arms."

Stedfastly pursuing the path of glory, Fastolfe during the siege of Orleans, performed one of the most brilliant actions which have been commemorated in the splendid annals of the war. He was appointed the commander of seventeen hundred soldiers, of whom scarcely more than one third were Englishmen, the guard of a convoy of provisions destined for the besieging army, then considerably pressed for an immediate supply. Anxious to distress the enemy by cutting off the expected reinforcement, some of the bravest and most distinguished of the French captains sallied out of the city at the head of between three and four thousand

* Biographia Britannica, vol. v.

men. Upon the approach of this formidable body, CHAP. II.
Fastolfe instantly adopted prompt and judicious measures to repel the attack; he formed the carts and carriages which conveyed the stores into a hollow square, and posting his followers behind this entrenchment, placed the archers, supported by the men at arms, at two openings, which alone afforded entrance to the troops. The French and Scottish commanders not agreeing respecting the mode of commencing the assault, the former charged on horseback, while the latter dismounted and fought on foot, but both were vigorously repulsed by the unyielding efforts of Fastolfe and his brave companions, who, baffling the enemy at every point with very severe loss, obtained a decided victory, and leaving the field strewed with the bodies of the slain, marched triumphantly to the English camp with the provisions which they had so gallantly defended. These supplies, on account of the strict fast observed during Lent, consisted principally of fish, and occasioned the late desperate struggle for their possession to be called "the battle of herrings." On the plains of Patay, a few months after the achievement of this gallant exploit, Fastolfe experienced a sad reverse of fortune; the good order of his retreat at the period in which Talbot and Hungerford were taken prisoners, has been deemed by many writers a movement not less worthy of praise than any former display of military skill, and it is supposed that it was only in consequence of some unfortunate dispute which had previously occurred between him and the Earl of Shrewsbury, that his conduct upon the present occasion was ever called in question. But however

CHAP. II. unmerited, the calumnious aspersions cast upon his character by Monstrelet, who affirms that the Duke of Bedford deprived him of the order of the garter on account of his disgraceful flight, has blackened his name with the brand of cowardice, and Shakspeare who was probably acquainted with the charge, but ignorant of the vindication, selected the slandered warrior for the craven voluptuary who makes so conspicuous a figure in dramas which will live for ever.

The historians of Sir John Fastolfe have written very long and able arguments to prove the improbability of his ever having incurred the displeasure of the Duke of Bedford, who did not possess the power either to take away the garter which the sovereign had presented, or to restore it again, as Monstrelet and other authors declare that he did "upon apparent cause of good excuse." The degradation of a knight never took place without previous trial, and was always accompanied by circumstances of great solemnity; the ceremonies observed being particularly imposing, and calculated to impress the minds of all who aspired to the high distinction conferred by the garter, with the salutary dread of incurring similar dishonour.

It would be needless to follow these zealous friends through their somewhat prolix defence, the well-attested fact of the subsequent favour which Fastolfe uninterruptedly enjoyed from the regent, being sufficient to exonerate him from the imputation of ever having forfeited the gallant Bedford's good opinion. In 1430, the year after the battle of Patay, Fastolfe was appointed lieutenant of Caen,

in Normandy; in the following year he accompanied the regent into France, and was soon afterwards dispatched to the council of Basle, in the honourable office of ambassador. He obtained with Lord Willoughby, the joint command of a force which the English government sent to the assistance of the Duke of Bretagne against the Duke of Alençon, and having been employed by his steady patron the Duke of Bedford, until the latest hour of that hero's existence, received the dying testimony of the undeviating attachment of his illustrious friend, by being appointed one of the executors of his will. The high estimation in which Fastolfe was held by Richard Duke of York, when succeeding to the command in Normandy, was evinced by a grant from his personal estate of twenty pounds yearly, bestowed upon the knight as a mark of regard and the reward of his merits; and at length in 1440, after having borne arms in the service of his country during the period of forty years, he retired to the estate bequeathed to him by his ancestors covered with his well earned laurels, and laden with the treasure which he had accumulated in the war. Upon his final settlement at Caister, in Norfolk, Sir John Fastolfe employed a portion of his wealth in the erection of a castle, which he furnished very magnificently, his natural love of splendour being in all probability improved by the taste acquired during his long residence in France. He possessed also a house in Southwark, but fixed his abode chiefly at Caister, where to the stirring tumult of a soldier's life succeeded the cares, anxieties, and petty warfare attendant upon the management of

CHAP. II

CHAP. II. property continually endangered by the incursions of marauding bands, and the arts of insidious neighbours. A country gentleman in these troublesome and lawless times could scarcely hope for domestic repose; and Sir John Fastolfe seems to have been exposed to every variety of annoyance (with the exception of the regular siege of his castle, which did not take place until after his death), which the licentious state of society and the weakness of the government combined to produce. The brief notices of passing events which occur in the Paston letters depict the habits, manners and disposition of the knight and his associates very forcibly, and from these authentic sources we may form a lively and accurate idea of the conduct and mode of living of the gentry of England.

Sir John Fastolfe was celebrated for his hospitality and his munificence; he was a generous friend, a liberal master, a bounteous patron of the clergy, and a benefactor of the poor. Yet, while sharing in all the virtues of the age, he escaped not untinctured by its vices. A letter preserved in the Paston collection, addressed by him to Sir Thomas Howes, rector of Castlecombe, besides directions for the good rule of Caister, contains one of those profane oaths for which the English of every rank were at that period so disgracefully notorious; a reproach still applied with too much justice at the present moment to classes above the vulgar. The epistle runs thus—"Trusty and well beloved friend I greet you well, and I pray you send me word who dare be so hardy to knock against you in my right, and say to them on my behalf that they shall be quiet as far

as law and reason will, and if they will not dread nor obey that, then they shall be quiet by Blackbeard and Whitebeard, that is to say by God and the Devil, and therefore I charge you send me word whether such as have been mine adversaries before this time continue still in their wilfulness." CHAP. II

Another trait in Fastolfe's character is developed in a letter which displays his eager anxiety to procure the wardship of a young heir, the management of the minor's estate, and the profit which would accrue from the negociation of his marriage; being the sordid motives of a man who was childless, having lost his only son by death, and whose ample fortune, apparent by the ready money and rich effects found in his houses, and the writ of inquiry into the lands and estates which he possessed at his decease, ought to have rendered him careless of an acquisition which could scarcely have been made of importance by honest means.

The unjust advantages openly gained by the rapacious men, who by dint of strong interest were appointed the guardians of rich wards is evident from the circumstance frequently mentioned in Dugdale's Baronage, as an act of especial favour emanating from the sovereign, the grant of the livery of his lands to a young heir, without obliging him to make proof of his age.

It was not to be expected that a man thus keenly attentive to his own interests should patiently submit to the loss of any part of the riches won by his glorious toils; and no blame can be attached to the desire which he manifested in a third letter, also extant, to obtain his share of the ransom of the

CHAP. II. Duke of Alençon; but, when contemplating those vast possessions accumulated in the wars of France, the order of the garter bestowed as a testimony of the sovereign's regard to his merit, and the rank of banneret likewise conferred by royal favour, the reader cannot fail to be surprised at the plea which Fastolfe urges in behalf of a suit to the Lords of Canterbury and Winchester, whom he directs his cousin, John Paston, "to move," that he may have license to found a college to the health of his soul, without any great fine, "in recompence of his long services, done unto the king and to his noble father, *never yet guerdoned or rewarded.*"

Some of the domestic troubles with which the knight was vexed in his retirement are enumerated in a second letter to Sir Thomas Howes. "Right trusty and well beloved servant I greet you well, and forasmuch as I understand that on Wednesday next the oyer and terminer shall be holden at Beccles, and ye advice to send you a certificate for cause of the forged quittance by Sir John Sypton, which writing I send by the bearer hereof, praying that you solicit to my council that the said Sir John Sypton be indicted thereupon, and that ye forget not Ulverston, Andrews and the others that forged a false office to cast my manor of Bradwell into the king's hand. Item, Sir John Bush, parson of Stratford, fished my stanks at Dedham, and helped to break my dam, destroyed my new mill and was against me always at Dedham, to the damage of twenty pounds, which may be indicted also. Item, he and John Cole hath by force this year, and other years, taken out of my waters at Dedham, to the number of twenty-

four swans and cygnets, I pray you this be not for- CHAP. II.
gotten." The answer to the knight's communication exhibits a frightful picture of the unblushing contempt of justice publicly shewn by the magistracy in the courts of law, under Henry's imbecile government. Sir Thomas tells his patron that the plaintiffs, who in the causes pending were his friends, dared not appear, in consequence of the glaring bias of the judges in favour of the opposite party. These unprincipled men laughed to scorn the declarations which were presented by the complainant's council, "the judges by their wilfulness might not find in their hearts to give not as much as a beck nor a twinkling of their eyes toward, but took it all in derision. God reward," exclaims the indignant writer, "such partiality." "The defendants," he continues, "came down attended by four hundred horse and more, and considering how their well willers were assembled at their instance, it would have been right jeopardous and fearful for any of the plaintiffs to have been present. Privot would suffer no man that was learned to speak for them (the plaintiffs), but took it as a venom, and took them by the nose at every third word." One of the judges, Yelverton, is described as having reproved his colleague, and spoken in condemnation of the shameful proceedings of the court, and Fastolfe's correspondent earnestly advises him in the matter of Sir John Sypton, "to labour in all wise to have Yelverton* judge both," he adds, "in that cause and in all others,"

* Yelverton it appears did not always gain the approbation of Fastolfe's friends, for William of Wyrcestre in a subsequent letter styles him "that cursed Norfolk justice."

CHAP. II. and he farther warns him, "that ye be ware that Privot have not to do in any wise, for then all will be nought."

In addition to these private feuds and aggressions, Fastolfe was in some danger of being involved with the government upon a charge of treason. The editor of the Paston Letters, suggests that the knight's peril was occasioned by his retreat into the Tower of London, when the Kentish rebels headed by Cade surrounded his house in Southwark, which he made no effort to defend; but as even the king himself was obliged to retire from the field and seek the security of a castle in consequence of the refusal of his army to act against the insurgents, there is a strong probability that Fastolfe's riches constituted his sole offence, and that Queen Margaret and her ministers who never objected to any means which promised to recruit an exhausted treasury, were desirous to procure an accusation of a serious nature in order that they might seize upon the wealthy knight's estates. The attempt which was made to brand the veteran warrior with the name of traitor, and the circumstances which menaced him with an evil of such magnitude, are detailed at length in a letter, addressed to Sir John Paston, by one of Fastolfe's servants, in which he humbly petitions the former, as the executor of his late master's will, to make him some compensation for his sufferings both under the rebels and the government.* "Right trusty and right entirely beloved master, I recommend me unto you with all manner of due reverence in the most lowly wise as me ought to do, evermore

* Penn's Collection.

desiring to hear of your worshipful state, prosperity CHAP. II
and welfare, the which I beseech God of his abundant grace increase and maintain to his most pleasure and your heart's desire. Pleaseth it good and gracious mastership tenderly to consider the great losses and hurts that your poor petitioner hath, and hath had ever since the commons of Kent came to Blackheath, and is at fifteen years passed; whereas my master Sir John Fastolfe knight, that is your testator, commanded your beseecher to take a man and two of the best horses that were in his stable with him to ride to the commons of Kent, to get the articles that they come for; and so I did, and also as soon as I came to the Blackheath the captain made the commons to take me; and for the savation of my master's horses I made my fellow to ride away with the two horses; and I was brought forthwith before the captain of the commons, and the captain demanded of me what was my cause of coming thither, and why that I made my fellow to steal away with the horses; and I said that I came thither to cheer with my wife's brethren and others that were mine allies, and gossips of mine that were present there; and then there was one there who said to the captain, that I was one of Sir John Fastolfe's men, and the two horses were Sir John Fastolfe's; and then the captain let cry treason upon me throughout the field, and brought me at four parts of the field with a herald of the Duke of Exeter before me, in the duke's coat of arms, making four oyez at four parts of the field, proclaiming me openly by the said herald, that I came thither to espy their puissance and habiliments of war, from the greatest traitor that was in England or

CHAP. II. France, as the said captain made proclamation at that time, from one Sir John Fastolfe knight, the which ministred all the garrisons of Normandy and Mauns and Mayn, the which was the cause of the losing of all the king's titles and right of an inheritance that he had beyond sea. And moreover he said that the said Sir John Fastolfe had furnished his place with the old soldiers of Normandy and habiliments of war to destroy the commons of Kent when that they came to Southwark, and therefore he said plainly that I should lose my head; and so forthwith I was taken to the captain's tent, and one axe and one block was brought forth to have smitten off my head, and then my master Poynigs your brother, with other of my friends, came and letted (prevented) the captain, and said plainly, that they should die an hundred or two, that in case be I died, and so by that mean my life was saved at that time. And then I was sworn to the captain and to the commons that I should go to Southwark, and array me in the best wise that I could, and come again to them to help them; and so I got the articles and brought them to my master, and that cost me more among the commons that day than twenty-seven shillings, whereupon I came to my master Fastolfe and brought him the articles and counselled him to put away all habiliments of war and the old soldiers, and so he did, and went himself to the Tower and all his many family with him, but Betts and Matthew Brayn; and had not I been, the commons would have brenned (burnt) his place and all his tenuries, where though it cost me of my own proper goods at

this time more than six marks (four pounds) in meat and drink, and yet notwithstanding the captain at that same time let take me at the White Hart in Southwark, and then commanded Lovelace to despoil me out of mine array, and so he did, and then he took a fine gown of muster Devillers furred with fine beavers, and one pair of brigandines covered with blue velvet and gilt nails with leg harness, the value of the gown and the brigandines eight pounds. Item. The captain sent certain of his meny to my chamber in your rents, and there they broke up my chest and took away one obligation of mine that was due to me, of thirty-six pounds, by a priest of Paul's, and one other obligation of one knight, of ten pounds, and my purse with five rings of gold and seventeen shillings and sixpence of gold and silver; and one harness complete of the touch of Milan; and one gown of fine Paris blue furred with martins; and two gowns, one furred with bogey and one other lined with frieze; and then they would have smitten off my head, when that they had despoiled me at the White Hart; and then my master Poyning and my friends saved me, and so I was put up until at night that the battle was at London Bridge, and then at night the captain put me into the battle at the bridge, and then I was wounded and hurt near hand to death; and then I was six hours in the battle and might never come out thereof; and four times before that time I was carried about throughout Kent and Sussex, and there they would have smitten of my head; and in Kent there as where my wife dwelled they took away all our goods movable that we had, and then would have hanged my wife, and

CHAP. II. five of my children, and left her no more goods than her kyrtle and her smock; and anon after that hurling (commotion) the Bishop of Rochester impeached me to the queen, and so I was arrested by the queen's commandement into the Marshalsea, and then was in right great distress and fear of mine life, and was threatened to have been hanged, drawn, and quartered; and so they would have made me have impeached my master Fastolfe of treason; and because that I would not, they had me up to Westminster, and then would have sent me to the gaol-house at Windsor, but my wife's, and one cousin of my own, that were yeomen of the crown, they went to the king and got grace and one charter of pardon."

The integrity of this faithful servant preserved Sir John Fastolfe from the storm which threatened his declining years, and no farther attempt was made by the cabinet of the queen to disturb him in his retirement. We hear of only one more cloud upon the sunshine which gilded the calm evening of the warrior's days: an attack upon the honour of the knight, which at the first breath rekindled all his youthful ardour, and with the spirit which in manhood's early prime nerved his arm upon the field of Azincourt, he roused himself to chastise the insolence of those who dared to couple his name with offensive language. A letter, dictated by him to his secretary, and signed by his own hand when nearly approaching his eightieth year, shews that the fiery blood that warms a soldier's veins is not to be chilled by the frosty touch of age. The knight expresses his indignation to his cousin Sir John Paston at some insulting words, reported to have

been spoken at a public table, in the following terms: CHAP. II.

"Right trusty and well-beloved cousin, I commend me to you, and please you to weet that I am advertized that at a dinner at Norwich, whereas ye and other gentlemen were present, that there were certain persons, gentlemen, which uttered scornful language of me, as in this wise with more, saying, 'War the Gosune war, and go we to dinner; go we where? To Sir John Fastolfe's, and there we shall well pay therefore.' What their meaning was I know well to be no good intent to me ward. Wherefore, cousin, I pray you, as my trust is in you, that ye give me knowledge by writing what gentlemen they be that had this report with more, and what more gentlemen were present, as ye would I should, and it were my duty to do for you in semblable wise. And I shall keep your information in this matter secret, and with God's grace so purvey for them that they shall not all be well pleased; at such a time a man may know his friends and his foes asunder."*

This flash of heroism from the expiring lamp of the veteran's life, was speedily followed by a lingering illness which, after suffering for the space of one hundred and forty days from hectic fever and asthma, brought him to the grave. Sir John Fastolfe resigned his existence, covered with years and honours, at the period in which the crown of England passed away from the house of Lancaster.† His funeral obsequies were celebrated with much pomp

* Paston Letters.

† In the thirty-sixth of the reign of Henry VI.—*Biographia Britannica*, vol. v.

CHAP. II. and solemnity at Norfolk, and his body was laid under an arch in a chapel dedicated to the virgin, of his own building, on the south side of the choir at the abbey church of St. Bennett of the Holm in that city.

The property left at the knight's decease was the subject of fierce dispute and wearisome litigation. The Duke of Norfolk claimed Caister castle from the Pastons as his inheritance; and the strong fortress erected by a man so experienced in the art of war, sustained, by the solidity of its walls and the valour of its defenders, a hot siege of several weeks' continuance. Fastolfe's extensive possessions were too inviting to be spared by the spoiling hand of rapacious nobles. A paper in the Biographia Britannica enumerates sixteen manors and forty-nine different places in which he owned landed estates, besides messuages, lands, rents, water-mills, and advowsons; and a document lately brought to light, and presented by Thomas Amyot, Esq. to the society of Antiquaries,† contains an inventory of all the plate, jewels, furniture, and other effects belonging to this wealthy soldier. The catalogue of treasure of various descriptions accumulated by Sir John Fastolfe, occupies nearly thirty quarto pages of the Archæologia, from whence the following extracts are made. The gold coins amounted to two thousand six hundred and forty-three pounds ten shillings, which, we are told by Mr. Amyot, according to the rate of money in those days, must be esteemed a considerable sum. Thirteen thousand four hundred ounces of silver plate are mentioned as the equipment of

† Printed in the twenty-first vol. of the Archæologia.

Caister castle. Three hundred ounces more were committed to the care of the monks of St. Bennett's abbey, and two thousand five hundred formed a part of the furniture attached to the house at Bermondsey. The workmanship of these massive ornaments appears to have been very beautiful: a silver salt cellar, weighing seventy-seven ounces, is described as moulded in the form of a bastille or tower, "alle gilt with roses;" and another still larger, "gilt, with many windows." The inventory likewise mentions a spice plate shaped like a double rose, ornamented with the knight's helmet and red roses, part of the blazonry of his arms. Six bowls also embellished with the helmet in enamel, two pottle pots of silver wreathed with foliage, a pair of basins, "alle gilt with an antelope in the midst." Two galot or gallon pots enriched in the "crownes with violet flowers;" four cups, gilt "like fountains, with one columbine flower enamelled in the midst." The remainder of the plate, though rich and weighty, is not so curious and elegant, and therefore may be passed over. The list of the wardrobe is very long, containing an account of an immense quantity of garments of various materials and shapes, in which satin, velvet, and cloth of gold, especially the two former, occur in profuse abundance. The tapestry hangings and cloths of arras, described as the adornments of the state apartments, glowed with vivid embroidery, depicting sacred, heroic, and pastoral subjects. The assumption, and the adoration of the shepherds, belong to the first; in the second, the siege of Falaise and the portraiture of nine conquerors occur; and in the last are represented a grove of poplars, various feats

CHAP. II. of archery, sylvan personages, hawk in hand, or following the chase, and the favourite character of the middle ages, a wild or "salvage man." In addition to these devices are two which appear to illustrate the popular legends of the time, "a geyaunt berying the legge of a bore," and "a gentlewoman harping by a castle." Nearly all the chambers were furnished with feather beds, and several contained articles which even now are confined to the luxurious abodes of the great: "pillowes of downe," and "bags stuffed with lavender," large carpets and embroidered coverlets. The great hall was appropriately decorated with eleven cross bows, a boar spear, and a target; and the winter-hall was hung with a cloth of arras representing the morysch or morris dance.

There are also numerous weapons and articles of offensive and defensive armour enumerated in the catalogue, but the list of books is exceedingly scanty. Mr. Amyot, whose indefatigable zeal in the service of literature entitles him to the gratitude of all who feel interested in the illustration of ancient modes and manners, observes in the preliminary remarks affixed to his transcription of these rolls, "that the knight's learned Secretary William of Worcester, whose studies he encouraged, and whose chamber is noticed in the inventory, does not seem to have directed his patron's taste to the acquirement of a library, though in his own person he engaged in the pursuit of books with the ardour of a modern bibliomaniac. It appears indeed from a passage in one of the Paston Letters, that Worcester was as eager to procure a good book of French or of poetry as his master Fastolfe was to purchase a fair manor.

Another letter in the same collection shews that the secretary had obtained two volumes which had belonged to his patron, though they are not described in the present inventory, one of them a chronicle of Jerusalem, the other a history of Fastolfe's own achievements. On the whole it is probable that Sir John, while he was a liberal benefactor to Magdalen College, Oxford, as well as the sister university, contented himself as his contemporaries of high rank probably did, "with promoting literature by his bounty without partaking of its enjoyments." Mr. Amyot also expresses his surprise at the small quantity of the generous extract of the grape mentioned in these rolls. "It is remarkable that, in a mansion so celebrated for its hospitality, the cellar should be found to contain only two pipes of red wine, and none of any other description." The butlery had its gallon pots and pottles of leather, and the size of the silver flaggons destined for the banquetting hall is sufficient to assure us that, notwithstanding the scanty furniture of his cellars, the knight's board was amply supplied with the exhilarating beverage, then, as at the present time, constituting so important a feature in the banquet. CHAP. II.

Fastolfe, as well as his companions in arms, engaged in the war with France, was a sufferer from the low state of the royal exchequer. The Paston papers contain an account of the losses and damages which he sustained in the king's service, both on the continent and in England. The crown was indebted to him for loans and charges while employed in France, in the sum of four thousand and eighty-three pounds, fifteen shillings, and seven pence; and

CHAP. II. during the space of fifteen years after his abode in Norfolk, he complains that he was obliged to attend the king and council at a great expense, for which it is stated, and for all his service to Henry VI., he had neither fee, wages, reward, nor recompense; his treasures of gold and silver, his wide and fertile lands, his rich effects and sumptuous houses, chiefly gained in that productive war, in which he had been by the favour of the ministry promoted to so many commands of trust and emolument, were not considered an adequate remuneration by a man who, almost burthened with his wealth, continued his solicitations and remonstrances until the last year of his existence. It was impossible in the impoverished state of the revenue for Henry to satisfy the demands continually poured in upon him by courtiers and nobles, whose thirst for gold nothing could appease; and however censurable Fastolfe's avarice may be deemed, he only resembled the great bulk of the nation in his unceasing desire to overflow coffers already filled to the brim. The knight's character seems to have been held in much estimation by his contemporaries; the Paston Letters contain numerous passages wherein he is mentioned with affectionate reverence by his kinsmen and dependents, both before and after his decease. A letter addressed to him by Thomas Bourchier, archbishop of Canterbury, is couched in the kindest and most respectful language. Yelverton, a judge of the King's Bench, whose name has occurred in the preceding pages, styles him "moste worshipfull and best betrusted maister:" and a knight, who was king at arms in the reign of Henry VII., speaks of

him in terms of high praise, calling him, "a rich knight and a grate bilder; having bilded Caster-Hall in Northfolk, a royal palace in Southwark, and another in Yarmouth: a speciall goode maister to the officers of armes," and adds, "was most triumphantly brought in erthe, that I have heard of his degree." CHAP. II.

CHAPTER III.

Predictions respecting the Birth-place of Henry VI.—Prophecy of Henry V.—Exhibition of the Infant King—Acts passed by the Parliament—Henry makes his second Appearance in Public—receives the Honour of Knighthood—he knights his young Companions—Marriage of the Dukes of Bedford and Burgundy, and the Count de Richemont—mean Subterfuge of the latter—Negociations with Scotland—Embassy from that Country—Liberation of the King of Scotland—He is unjustly reproached by the English Historians—Accomplishments of James—his Attachment to the Lady Joan Beaufort—the Monarch's unhappy Fate—his poetical Talents and other Acquirements—Poem of the Duke of Orleans—Division in the English Cabinet—Henry's Coronation—the Banquet—Proposition respecting a Coronation in France—Panic of the English Soldiers—Henry visits France—his Reception at Paris—Processions and Pageants—the King is crowned—Indignation of the French Prelates—Complaints of the Canons—Dislike of the Proceedings by the French—Magnificence of the Banquet—a Tournament—Honours paid to the King on his Return to England—Jealousy of the Duke of Burgundy—Richemont's crooked Policy—War with Bretagne—Spirit of the Duke of Bedford—Co-operation of the Cardinal—the Duke of Bedford's impolitic Marriage—Quarrel between the Dukes of Bedford and Burgundy—Successful Negociations of the French King—Indignation of the English at Burgundy's Defection—Embassy of the Heralds—their Danger—Murders committed in the Metropolis—Answer of the Council—Disrespect offered to Henry—Grief at the Death of the Duke of Bedford—Speech of Charles at the Hero's Tomb—Burgundy's Appeal to the Citizens of Ghent—martial Ardour of the Flemings—their vain Boasts—Conduct on the March to

Calais—confident Expectations of the Flemings—Events of the Siege—Embassy from the Duke of Gloucester—Burgundy's Answer—Discontent of the Flemings—Defeat sustained by the Men of Ghent—Mutiny in the Burgundian Camp—the Duke is compelled to retreat—Gloucester's Exploits in Flanders—Death of two Dowager Queens of England—and of Isabella of France—Funeral of the latter.

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THE unfortunate events which crowded upon each other in Henry's disastrous reign, were by the superstitious supposed to have been the consequence of his birth at Windsor, a place predestined to bring misery upon the head of that monarch who should first see the light within its fatal precincts, and the calamities which befel the luckless Henry are also supposed to have been foretold by the boding fears of his anxious parent. According to some of the old writers, Henry V., aware of a prediction which menaced evil to those of his family who should enter the world in a spot of such ill-omen, had charged his queen to select some other place for the nativity of her expected infant; and when informed that his commands had been disobeyed, his joy at the birth of a son and heir was checked by a prophetic anticipation of the misfortunes which afterwards befel his only child, and he is said to have exclaimed to the Lord Fitzhugh, his chamberlain and confidential friend, "I, Henry of Monmouth, shall small time reign and much get, and Henry, born at Windsor, shall long time reign and lose all; but God's will be done:"* a tale which though perhaps beneath the dignity of history, may be recorded in a work which professes to give a more minute and familiar representation of the opinions and prejudices of the

* Baker.

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times than the pages of writers of higher merits and pretensions deign to exhibit.

The infant king, when two years old, was carried by his young and lovely mother from Windsor to London, and lying on her lap as she was borne in a chair through the city to Westminster, was shown to the admiring people; and afterwards placed upon the throne, sanctioned a parliament by his presence.* The acts passed by this assembly were distinguished for their wisdom, justice and humanity; the regulations which limited the protector's power were not framed in that mean spirit of jealousy which was subsequently so apparent: very laudable pains were taken to facilitate the dispatch of business, and to ensure the impartial administration of the laws; all petitions which were to be presented on Wednesdays were directed to be answered on the following Friday, and it was decreed that the bills from the poorest men were to be read first, and the king's sergeant was sworn to give the poorest applicant assistance of true council without any gratuity. This parliament also enacted that in all questions concerning the prerogative of the king the opinions of the judges should be taken.

When Henry had attained his third year he was again brought publicly to London by the queen, and exhibited to his subjects borne in a chair to St. Paul's. The Protector and the Duke of Exeter were stationed at the west door of the cathedral, and each taking a hand led their baby monarch to the steps; he was then carried to the high altar, where he was instructed to bend his infant knees in

* Parliament Rolls, vol. iv.

reverence, and proceeding to the crucifix made his offerings, and afterwards was conveyed into the churchyard, and being placed on horseback rode with his attendants in state through Cheapside and the city towards Southwark, and thence to Kingston. In the following year the young monarch, who appears to have been a child of much promise, was dubbed a knight by his uncle the Duke of Bedford, when called over to England to effect a reconciliation between the Duke of Gloucester and Cardinal Beaufort; and after the performance of this interesting ceremony, the juvenile warrior, we are told, conferred the same honour "upon many of his servants."* While the loyalty of his council was manifested by the public homage which they paid their baby sovereign, the wisdom of Henry's ministers was equally evinced by the measures which they adopted to maintain their authority in the neighbouring kingdom. Although the Duke of Burgundy seemed bound to the English cause by the powerful incitements of interest and revenge, the regent judiciously resolved to strengthen these ties by a marriage with Philip's sister, a princess celebrated for her beauty and her merits, and in order to attach the Duke of Bretagne, whose friendship was a point second only in importance to that of the Burgundian, the more closely to Henry and his government, negociated a matrimonial union between the duke's brother Arthur, Count de Richemont, and the widow of Louis, the late dauphin of France, also the sister of the Duke of Burgundy. The influence possessed by Richemont over the

* Baker.

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mind of the Duke of Bretagne rendered Bedford doubly anxious to secure his alliance, more especially as there was some reason to fear that the expectation of personal advantage might incline him to join the opposite party, were he left to choose a connection which did not bind him to the House of Burgundy. This prince had been taken prisoner at the battle of Azincourt, but, perhaps out of compliment to his mother, the queen dowager of England, was permitted to visit Bretagne on his parole; before his return Henry V. had ceased to live, and pretending that as his word had been pledged to the deceased monarch alone, death had released him from his engagement; the regent being unable, or deeming it impolitic to attempt to recover his person by force, dissembled the indignation which so poor an evasion inspired, and avoided a quarrel which would have given a potent friend to the young king of France.

The extraordinary honours lavished by Charles VII. upon his Scottish allies, and more particularly upon the two commanders, one of whom he had made constable of France while he created the other Duke of Touraine, and the ardour with which these intrepid soldiers fought in his service, determined the English government to procure a peace with Scotland. The death of the ambitious and intriguing Duke of Albany, and the succession of his son, a weak indolent prince, to the regency, paved the way to this desirable event. The King of Scotland, who had been detained in strict though not harsh confinement for the period of thirteen years, languished to behold his native land again, while the

Scots were equally eager to greet the monarch, whose sad captivity they had so long and so hopelessly lamented. Albany, weary of the cares of government, was extremely willing to resign his authority, and it only remained to settle the terms for the imprisoned king's release. For this purpose the Bishop of Glasgow, the Earl of March, and five knights were dispatched from Scotland, and these envoys were permitted to have an interview with James previous to their final negociation with Henry's ministers: one of the articles of the treaty obliged the monarch to issue his command against the entrance of the Scots in the service of France; and that James might be more effectually weaned from the cause which his subjects espoused with such fiery ardour, the English plenipotentiaries were instructed to accede to any offer of a matrimonial alliance between the royal families of Scotland and England, which might be made for James by the Scottish embassy; but, in consideration of the punctilious observances demanded by female delicacy, to abstain from the first advances towards so desirable an object. Fortunately, the wishes of the king were in accordance with the project of the English ministry.

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Henry IV. had in some measure atoned for the violation of a solemn truce in the detention of the heir of Scotland before the period of its termination, by justifying his assertion that he was equally competent with his brother of France to the superintendence of the education of a king. Every facility was afforded to James for the cultivation of his mind, and he became so famous for his accomplish-

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ments as a scholar, a knight and a gentleman, that after his liberation, when the English found that their unwarrantable expectations from the steadiness of his friendship were disappointed, he was accused of ingratitude towards a kingdom wherein he had been trained to the love of literature, and instructed "in marciall feates and warlike affairs."* Ardently devoted to polite learning, and gifted with genius which exalted him to a level with the most celebrated poets of the age, the captivity of James had been sweetened by the smiles of beauty; an attachment the more delightful from the romance which attended it had sprung up in the monarch's breast, and his heart had freely surrendered its liberty to the fair object, who formed alike the theme and the inspiration of his muse: nor had the graces and the talents of the princely James failed to excite a gentle feeling in return, and happily no obstacle interposed to mar the felicity of the enamoured pair. The rank of Jane Beaufort, the king's enslaver, rendered her eligible to match with royalty; her father the Earl of Somerset was the son of John of Ghent, and her maternal ancestry was equally illustrious: her mother Margaret Holand being descended from Edward I.; accomplished as she was lovely, her beauty and virtues did honour to the monarch's choice.

The marriage took place previous to the departure of James from England, and the connubial happiness of these fondly attached lovers was only interrupted by the ruthless hand which laid the hope and pride of Scotland in a blood stained tomb. The

* Hall.

particulars of that dismal tragedy which plunged Scotland into mourning, and the barbarous punishment adjudged to the regicide and his associates fortunately do not belong to these pages, and the writer turns with gladness from the sickening recollection of the fearful crime and its horrible expiation. Much of the poetry of James I. of Scotland is unhappily lost, but enough has been discovered and brought to light by the diligent researches of the learned, to display the extent and variety of the royal author's intellectual acquirements, both in the graver sciences and in the fine arts; he was deeply read in law, philosophy, and divinity, an excellent grammarian, and a skilful musician, and though ardently devoted to more abstruse studies, "his sweetest lay was given to love."

It is somewhat extraordinary that at one of the darkest periods of human ignorance ever occurring in the Christian world, two of the most illustrious captives, whom the chances of fortune or of war placed in the hands of Henry VI. should have, like caged nightingales, made their gloomy prisons melodious with song. The Duke of Orleans during his long residence in England attached himself to the same pursuits which beguiled the time of his distinguished contemporary, and found in literature a solace in his dreary exile: the duke's "love poems, roundels, and songs," composed in the English language, at that time exceedingly rude and unpolished, are efforts which, considering the difficulties which a foreigner must have experienced in writing in an uncouth and newly acquired tongue, merit very high praise.

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Hitherto the affairs of the regency had been conducted with the most profound policy, and the welfare of the young king and the good of the nation appeared to be the sole aim of the council and the parliament; but it was scarcely possible for an assembly like the former, presenting so many discordant interests, to continue always unanimous, or, to be entirely divested of selfish views, where the members were so frequently and so strongly tempted to render their power subservient to their own private advantage. Indiscretion in some of Henry's ministers proved also as fatal as the more deliberate schemes of others.

Gloucester probably did not foresee the ruinous consequences of his hasty marriage with Jacqueline of Hainault, yet by that rash act the king sustained an injury nearly if not quite equal to those occasioned by the premeditated wiles of crafty men. The struggles for ascendance in the cabinet which ended in the defeat of Gloucester, were likewise productive of infinite mischief to Henry, who at a very early age deprived by the triumphant faction of the guardianship of his truest friend, was delivered into the hands of a party only desirous to keep him in a state of deplorable ignorance and abject subjection to their will.

Anxious to supersede the necessity of a protector, Cardinal Beaufort proposed and carried the measure of the king's coronation, and Henry was henceforth a mere cipher in the hands of his artful ministers; who, as they could not like Gloucester be suspected of aspiring to the crown, were permitted to usurp the whole power into their own hands unques-

tioned and unreproved, except by the fruitless remonstrances of the injured prince, whose just right to the highest place in the council they had so successfully opposed.

1429. The ceremony of Henry's coronation, which took place when he was only eight years old, was performed with much pomp at Westminster. Fabian has preserved a detailed account of the dainties which graced the banquet, a feast not more curious for the splendour of the cookery, than for the information which it affords of the inveteracy of the government against the religious doctrines of Wickliffe's followers. Amid the dishes which crowned the board the worthy citizen enumerates, "A viande royal plantyd losynges of gold. Bore heads in castellys of gold and enarmed. Custardes royal with a lysperde of golde syttynge therein, and holdyng a floure-de-lyse. Viande blanche-barred with gold. Gely pasty wryten and noted with Te Deum Laudamus. A frytour garnished with a leopardes hed and 11 estryche feders. A sotyltee, an emperoure and a kynge, arayed in mantellys of garters, whiche figoured Syggsmunde, the emperoure and Henry the V.; and a fygure like unto Kynge Henry VI. knelynge to foe theym, with this ballade takkyd by him—"

> "Agayne miscreants the Emperor Sygismonde
> Hath shewed his might, which is imperiall,
> And Henry the Fifte a noble knighte was founde,
> For Christe his cause in actes martiale
> Cherished the churche, to Lollars gave a fall;
> Giving example to kynges that succede
> And to their braunche herein especiale,
> While he doth reigne to love God and diede."

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In the following year the victories achieved by the maid of Orleans, and the triumphant march of Charles VII. to Rheims, compelled the council to deliberate seriously upon the posture of affairs, and to adopt the most efficacious measures to retrieve the late misfortunes. The result of these consultations was a resolution to act upon the suggestions of the Duke of Bedford and his associates, who strongly advised the English government to send the young king to France to receive the crown, which seemed to be vanishing from his grasp. The recovery of Rheims; a place to which the reverential regard of the French people and the long-established custom of selecting it for the coronation of their sovereigns, had attached vast importance, was also determined upon as a preliminary measure; but the spirit which had animated the early commanders in the war either no longer existed, or was unavailable: the battle cry of a Bedford or a Talbot could not as heretofore draw thousands to the standard of St. George, assured it would lead to victory. Terror of the enchantments of the maid had seized upon the soldiers. Men who were never known to flinch when led against fortresses held by long-established opinion to be impregnable, quailed and fled before that mysterious banner and that spell-working sword wielded by a woman's feeble arm; and it was not found possible to raise a sufficient force even to attempt the enterprize. Henry was therefore obliged to delay his departure until April. He was again stayed at Calais by the impossibility of raising a sufficient escort to conduct him to the metropolis; and it was not until the capture of the luckless Joan

before Compeign that the young king could proceed upon his journey; there being still much difficulty in rallying the failing energy of the soldiers, so deep and so universal was the consternation inspired by the reputation of the maiden's marvellous attributes.* Henry landed in France upon St. George's day, but did not reach Paris until the following November. He was accompanied by a guard of three thousand men; and the Duke of Bedford, the Cardinals of Winchester and of York, his kinsman Richard Plantagenet, whom Monstrelet styles "the rich Duke of York," the Earls of Suffolk, Warwick, and Salisbury, rode in his train, in addition to a numerous attendance of the great lords of France. Half way between St. Denis and Paris the provost of the latter place, with a numerous retinue of burghers attired in crimson-satin doublets and blue hoods, and followed by a large company of the less distinguished citizens clothed in scarlet, advanced to meet and to pay homage to the royal guest. The king having been respectfully greeted by the provost and the citizens, nine persons on horseback, representing the nine worthies, each armed "according to his manner," and intended to personate Joshua, Gideon, Sampson, David, Judas Maccabeus, Alexander, Julius Cæsar, Charlemagne, and Godfrey de Bouillon, came forward to make their obeisances; and a little farther on, the first president of the parliament in his dress of ceremony, followed by the lords of the parliament clad in flowing robes of vermilion, the members of the chamber of accounts, the directors of the finances,

* Rymer.

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the masters of request, and the secretaries, all decked in gowns of the same colour, awaited to salute their young monarch; each advancing according to his rank, and bending first to him and then to the lords in his train as they passed along. Immense multitudes crowded to gaze upon this splendid cavalcade; "with regard," says Monstrelet, "to the common people they were numberless." At the gate of St. Denis appeared the second of those fantastic exhibitions invented by the genius of the age to amuse the eyes of royalty upon great occasions: the city arms were constructed upon so large a scale as to admit six persons within them: one of them robed as a bishop represented the clergy, a second the university, a third the burghers, and the remainder personated serjeants. On passing through the gate Henry was presented with three crimson hearts; one contained two doves, another was filled with small birds, these being suddenly released from their confinement winged their flight over the young king's head, whose juvenile fancy was no doubt delighted by this pretty incident. The third heart when opened presented rich clusters of violets and other flowers, which were thrown in a fragrant shower over the accompanying nobles. Immediately upon his entrance into the city, the provost and burghers raised an azure-coloured canopy studded with the fleur de lys, over the king's head; and at the bridge of St. Denis, beneath the green boughs of a mimic forest, three savages and a woman were seen in combat together; and under the scaffold, upon which this sylvan pageant was raised, a fountain of Hippocras spouted forth, surrounded by three

swimming mermaids; the sparkling beverage kept in a continual flow for the benefit of all who chose to stoop and taste it. At the second gate of St. Denis, the wondering eyes of the royal child were presented with a pantomimic representation of the nativity of the holy virgin, her marriage, the adoration of the three kings, the massacre of the innocents, and a venerable man sowing the good seed; "which characters," we are told by Monstrelet, "were specially well acted." The legendary history of St. Denis was depicted over the gate, and elicited much admiration from the English spectators. A more interesting scene awaited Henry at the church of the Innocents: the whole street was converted into a forest. At the monarch's approach a stag bounded forth from the woody covert, followed by a sweeping train of huntsmen and dogs, and after a brisk chace the sagacious animal (performing his part to admiration) directed his fleet steps to the king's horse, and was saved by the protector he had been so well instructed to choose. The last pageant exhibited a group of princes and nobles; the centre person intended to pourtray King Henry VI. clothed in a robe ornamented with the fleur de lys, with the Duke of Burgundy and the Count de Nevers on his right hand, and the Duke of Bedford with the Earls of Warwick and Salisbury on his left; the former presenting the shield of France, the latter that of England, each person decorated with his proper tabard of arms. Upon the king's arrival at the palace, the holy relics were shewn to him and his barons. After dinner he paid a visit to his grandmother the dowager Queen of France, and the next

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morning repaired to the castle of Vincennes, where he remained until the day appointed for his coronation.

1430.

This ceremony took place on the seventeenth of November. Henry, attended by a numerous and splendid retinue of the nobility and the ecclesiastics, proceeded to the church of Notre Dame. At the celebration of this solemn rite the harmony which had previously subsisted between the French and the English sustained a slight interruption from the jarring pretensions of the Cardinal of Winchester and the Bishop of Paris. The haughty Beaufort insisted upon taking the most conspicuous part in the ceremonial, and placed the crown upon the king's brow in despite of the rival prelate's claim to the right of performing this sacred and honourable office; nor was he content with the usurpation of one privilege, but chaunted the high mass also, to the great displeasure of the mortified bishop. Another cause of complaint arose from the seizure by Henry's officers of a silver cup, containing the wine which, in compliance with ancient custom, the king had presented at the offertory, and which was demanded as their legal perquisite by the canons of the cathedral.

The enraged ecclesiastics pleaded their cause before the council, and after they had spent large sums of money in support of their claim, it was allowed, and the disputed vessel restored. The innovations upon long established usages introduced by the English were not pleasing to Henry's foreign subjects, who saw their ancient rights, which they had been accustomed to regard with reverence, superseded by new and foreign fashions: the disadvantage occasioned by the loss of Rheims was but too evi-

dent, and it was perhaps as much a matter of necessity as of choice that deprived the spectacle of half its attractions, in substituting strange ceremonies for those old familiar observances with which an enthusiastic nation had been wont to crown their native kings. The great mass of the people looked with little interest at a ceremony which we are told was performed "more after the English than the French mode."* CHAP. III.

The banquet which succeeded was calculated to give more satisfaction, it being of the most sumptuous description, and crowded with dishes too numerous to be recorded even by so diligent a chronicler as Monstrelet. The young king, who sate at a marble table in the centre of the hall, was together with his nobles entertained by four pageants, and the repast was also enlivened by animating strains of music waked by minstrels cunning in their art. On the following day the festivities were concluded by a grand tournament, in which the Earl of Arundel and the bastard of St. Paul gained the prizes and won the admiration of the fair spectators as the most gallant tilters of the field. After the residence of a few days at Paris Henry repaired to Rouen, where he kept his Christmas, and quitting a kingdom to which he was destined never to return, landed at Dover on the ninth of February 1431, and proceeded by easy stages to the metropolis. The king's reception in England was both gorgeous and flattering; pageants were devised, and cavalcades assembled as glittering and tasteless as those which had greeted him in his foreign dominions. He was escorted from

* Monstrelet.

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Barham Downs to Blackheath by the gentlemen of Kent in red hoods;* at the latter place the royal train was joined by the Lord Mayor of London and the aldermen in scarlet, and a deputation of the citizens clothed in white. In the pageants which were stationed at the bridge and at the conduits, there were even more than the usual proportion of the abstract virtues, oddly enough personated by ladies dressed in bawdricks of blue, or draperied in flowing robes powdered with stars of gold, who issuing out of goodly towers, curious tabernacles, or fragrant bowers, shadowed by mimic exotics, and refreshed by the wells of Mercy, Grace and Pity, lavished courtly panegyrics mingled with more homely advice upon the monarch as he passed along. Besides the glimpse of Paradise afforded by the genius of Cheapside, in which the generous fountains were supplied with wine instead of water, a most potent and stupendous giant, a child of extraordinary beauty decked with the kingly crown, and a venerable patriarch in full costume diversified the female groupes; and the whole spectacle was finished by one of those devices from which the pious Christian of modern days would turn with disgust, though doubtless the invention of devout minds which saw neither sin nor absurdity in giving a representation of the deity according to their own gross conceptions of his person and attributes. After the infliction of a vast number of verses from nearly every individual belonging to the dramatis personæ of a show, which began at London Bridge and ended at the Cathedral,

* Fabian.

Henry at the conclusion of divine service was conducted in state to his palace.

The triple alliance which the Regent had effected with Burgundy and Bretagne was early threatened with dissolution. Philip's affection for the English was considerably weakened by his fierce dispute with Gloucester, and though Bedford's unremitting exertions at length produced the outward appearance of amity, every angry passion still continued to flame within his indignant heart; and the alienation gradually commenced which ended in open war. The intriguing Richemont allured to the French monarch's court by a splendid bribe, the high office of constable, vacant by the death of the Earl of Buchan, had persuaded his brother to quit the banner of Henry of Lancaster, for that of Charles of Anjou;* and the English, enraged at this disgraceful breach of a solemn treaty, turned their swords against Bretagne. The duke, dismayed at the devastation committed by his exasperated enemies, solicited and obtained a truce for three months, which was strictly kept on both sides; but at the expiration of the stipulated period, still disagreeing upon the terms proposed for peace, hostilities recommenced with greater fury than ever, and the English though gaining new honours and laurels in these campaigns, were by engaging on fresh ground diverted from the pursuit of their conquests in France. Misfortune and error followed each other in rapid succession until both became irreparable; the siege of Orleans too rashly undertaken was fraught with ruin, yet still the vigorous spirit of Bedford delayed the final stroke

* Monstrelet.

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with scanty supplies from England, nearly drained of all her wealth in the support of an almost interminable war; deprived by death of his most able commander, and compelled to rally the panic-struck fugitives who had learned to fly before their lately despised foes, he contrived to keep Charles at bay, and to maintain possession of a large tract of country, and numerous important garrisons. The opportune assistance afforded by the warlike cardinal, who braved the anger of the Pope by relinquishing the crusade against the Bohemian reformers, to prop his young kinsman's falling power in France, enabled Bedford to keep for a short time longer his formidable position in the centre of a kingdom once so nearly conquered; but even this wise and cautious prince suffered himself to be betrayed into an act of the highest imprudence. In despite of his most strenuous endeavours Charles gained ground; vainly had he attempted to revive the fading loyalty of Henry's French subjects by the pageant of a coronation, and as vainly had he delivered the persecuted Maid of Orleans to the flames: the English cause was evidently declining; yet, at the moment wherein Burgundy's friendship had become more valuable than ever, he suddenly contracted a marriage which could not fail to be displeasing to the impetuous duke, already offended by the proud tenacity with which Orleans had been withheld by the English, when its citizens offered to place it in his hands in trust for their absent prince.

Upon the death of his consort, the regent is represented to have been overwhelmed with affliction, the loss of one so virtuous and so fair was in itself a

sufficient cause for grief, without those gloomy anticipations of Burgundy's defection which it was calculated to inspire; but notwithstanding the strong reason which Bedford had for lamentation, the days of his mourning were speedily terminated, and allowing himself to be fascinated by the charms of Jacqueline of Luxemburg, daughter of the Count de St. Paul, he led her to the altar without consulting the Duke of Burgundy, who we are told was highly offended by the disrespectful omission. The regent celebrated his nuptials with much pomp, at the episcopal palace of Therouenne,* and in commemoration of the event presented the church with two magnificent bells, procured from England at his own expence.

The effect produced upon the mind of Burgundy by this inauspicious marriage was soon visible; his bitter remarks were reported to Bedford, and the angry replies of the conscious prince conveyed with the same officious malice to the Burgundian's ears. Alarmed by the symptoms of enmity which were daily developed Cardinal Beaufort zealously exerted himself in mediating between these now estranged kinsmen, and succeeded at length in persuading them to meet each other at St. Omer: and here Bedford committed a second error more unpardonable and more irremediable than the first. Arrangements had been made for the interview of the two dukes, without compromising the dignity of either or exacting any undue deference from the one to the other, but the regent instead of repairing to the appointed spot peremptorily insisted upon receiving a previous visit

* Monstrelet.

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from the Duke of Burgundy at his own quarters. The well wishers of both parties hurried to and fro with anxious solicitations to each striving to prevail upon Burgundy to submit, and endeavouring to persuade Bedford to waive the disputed point, but both remained stubbornly obstinate. Cardinal Beaufort made a final appeal to the Duke of Burgundy's hospitality, and drawing him aside, said in a friendly manner, "How is this, fair nephew, that you refuse to compliment a prince who is son and brother to a king, by calling on him when he has taken so much trouble to meet you in one of your own towns, and that you will neither visit nor speak to him!"* The Duke replied that he was ready to pay his respects to the regent at the appointed place, and the prelate, compelled to relinquish his unavailing efforts to bend the spirits of these haughty princes, saw them both depart from the town without meeting, and more discontented with each other's conduct than ever.

The partizans of Charles now found a willing auditor in Burgundy; the politic monarch dismissed all those persons from his court who had been concerned in the assassination of the duke's father, and pleaded his youth, his inexperience, and his utter inability either to prevent or to punish a deed which he alleged had been undertaken without his knowledge or consent, in excuse of his apparent participation in the murder. Burgundy had satiated himself in the blood of France which had died his avenging sword even to the hilt, and he perceived that his own interests were involved in a peace with Charles, and that a continuation of the war would only gratify

* Monstrelet.

the ambition of his ally, without producing the slightest benefit to himself; he dissembled for a short time, but at the congress of Arras threw off the mask, and the English were left to combat single-handed with France, Burgundy, and Bretagne.

The news of the Duke of Burgundy's defalcation was received in England with mingled anger and grief. Philip upon his reconciliation with the French monarch sent the explanatory letters already mentioned in a former part of this work, to Henry VI. by two heralds, one of whom was king-at-arms of the order of the Golden Fleece, and these officers were accompanied by a mendicant friar, instructed by the pope's legate to remonstrate publicly with the King of England and his council on the infinite cruelty of prolonging a war which had already desolated a christian land, and to employ all his eloquence in representing the blessings that would ensue if a lasting peace could be concluded between the two kingdoms. Whether the friar's rhetoric would have had sufficient influence to produce so desirable an event must ever remain unknown, for he was not permitted to make his intended oration, the council being in no humour to listen to advice coming from so questionable a quarter. The ministers of the holy see could not have made a more injudicious choice in the escort of their ambassador, or selected a more unseasonable moment for their interference. So strongly were the English people irritated by the conduct of the Duke of Burgundy, that it was even dangerous for the heralds to appear in the streets, notwithstanding the protection afforded by the laws of honour to the persons of men who were invested

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with an office held sacred from the most barbarous times; and to ensure their safety they were committed to the care of some of Henry's pursuivants, and only stole out occasionally to hear mass. They were denied an audience with the king, and were apprehensive the whole time of their residence in England of sustaining some personal injury in consequence of the disagreeable information which they had conveyed; nor were their fears without foundation, for the instant that the report of Burgundy's defection was made public the fury of the rabble of London was aroused to madness, and directed indiscriminately against all foreigners; many horrible outrages and even murders were committed before the magistrates could stay the brutal hands of the enraged populace, or prevent the general massacre of those unfortunate strangers whom they had marked out for destruction.*

The council refused to send a written answer to the Duke of Burgundy's letter, and dismissed the heralds with a verbal message, merely stating, that "the king, with the princes of his blood and his council, had seen and examined the letters they had brought, and that they had been equally surprised at their contents as at the conduct of the duke, for which, if it pleased God, the king would find a remedy."† The heralds were farther informed that they were at liberty to return to their own country, and being unable to obtain a more respectful reply to the communication of the duke their master, proceeded homewards to report the ill success of their ungracious errand.

* Hall. † Monstrelet.

In addition to the unpalatable nature of the contents, the style of Burgundy's letter was calculated to give umbrage to the English council. He purposely omitted the title of King of France in the superscription; nor did he, according to former custom, call Henry his sovereign lord, merely addressing him as the high and mighty Prince Henry, by the grace of God King of England, his well-beloved cousin. An object of unqualified hatred to the whole nation, Burgundy's name was never mentioned in any circle from the highest to the lowest rank of the community without eliciting the bitterest invective. The English had not exhausted their animadversions and complaints at the insolence and perfidy of their treacherous ally, before they experienced deeper cause for grief in the death of the gallant Bedford; the remains of the hero were interred under a tomb of black marble, on the north side of the high altar of the cathedral church of Rouen, amid the tears and lamentations of his dejected friends. Upon the recovery of Normandy, the courtiers of France advised their monarch to destroy a monument which commemorated the triumphs of the English arms; but Charles, more generous in his animosity to those brave enemies from whom he had wrested his crown by almost a miracle, exclaimed, "Let him repose in peace; we may be thankful that he sleeps here, for when awake he gave disquietude to the stoutest heart amongst us!"*

The sudden dissolution of the alliance between the English and the Burgundians produced the most inveterate enmity on both sides; and Philip,

* Hall.

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burning to avenge the continual affronts offered by his new enemies, resolved to besiege Calais, a town which in former times had formed a part of the inheritance of his ancestors. Hastening to Ghent,* the duke invited the citizens and burghers to repair to the banqueting hall; and better versed in the art of war than accomplished in rhetoric, entrusted one of his councillors with the representation of his grievances. The people were told of the undoubted right which the duke possessed to the town of Calais, a part of his dominions long held by force against him by the English, who since the peace of Arras had been guilty of numerous aggressions upon his subjects, and who had defamed his person and honour in various proclamations; insults which he could not suffer tamely without incurring disgrace. And when the assembly were moved to indignation by the detail of affronts offered to their sovereign, they were exhorted to supply him with men and money for the conquest of Calais, a place which the orator affirmed was by the occupation of the English exceedingly prejudicial to all Flanders: the commerce of the Flemings being carried on at a considerable disadvantage, as they were compelled in their barter for merchandize to pay the English traders either in ingots of refined gold or silver or in money, at the low rate at which the inhabitants using their own discretion chose to value it. The citizens of Ghent enflamed by this harangue, eagerly assented to the duke's wishes, and disdaining to deliberate calmly upon the expedience of rushing headlong into so difficult an undertaking, or to consult the

* Monstrelet.

other members of their body who had a right to a voice upon so important a point, or to listen to the advice of a few wise nobles who differed with them in opinion, pledged themselves to support the war.*

The whole of Flanders caught the flame. The ostentation of the inhabitants, we are told, being the strongest motive for their alacrity, they were desirous to shew how sumptuously they were equipped with arms and other martial habiliments, and when decked in their costly trappings fancied that no fortress would be able to withstand them. Hall, in his homely language, has depicted the pompous arrogance of these self-sufficient warriors in a very entertaining manner. "Lord! how the Flemines bragged and the Hollanders craked, that Calice should be wonne and all the Englishmen slaine; swearyng and staryng that they should have it within thre daies at the moste; thynking verely, that the toune of Calice could no more resist their puyssance than a pottle of double beere when they fall to quaffyng." Proverbial for their riches, the Duke of Burgundy's Flemish subjects spared no expense in preparation; but the moment they embarked upon actual service their spirits failed them, and they began to utter complaints of the unexpected hardships which they were compelled to endure. The quota of troops furnished by Ghent were mustered at eight o'clock in the morning, but were detained for the space of four hours in the market place, and did not quit the city until noon. The Duke of Burgundy accompanied them for a short distance on the road, and then proceeded to Bruges to facilitate

* Monstrelet.

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the movements of the forces from that place. The weather being sultry the corpulent inhabitants of Ghent suffered exceedingly from the heat; two of their captains and several of the soldiers overpowered by the fierce rays of the sun dropped down dead; other disasters occurred on their route. One-and-twenty of these undisciplined recruits were hanged for pillaging the peasants, and taking the law into their own hands they burned two mills as a punishment for the alleged cowardice of their owners in a late combat with the English. After the march of a few days they made their appearance before Calais, and their encampment, from the regularity of its construction and the number and splendour of its tents, formed a very magnificent spectacle.*

The strength of his armament evinced the eager desire which Burgundy felt to deprive England of one of its most important acquisitions; failure was considered to be impossible, and Monstrelet informs us, that, "the Flemings were so presumptuous that they thought nothing could be done without them," and even imagined that the English from fear of them would abandon Calais and fly to England. "This," says the Chronicler, "was frequently the subject of their conversation with the Picards, adding, that they well knew that when the English should be informed that their lords of Ghent were in arms against them, they would not run the risk of being conquered, but make a timely retreat; that it was an act of great negligence in the fleet not to have advanced prior to their arrival before the port of Calais, to cut off their escape."

* Monstrelet.

The garrison of Calais however were not impressed with such exalted notions of the prowess of their assailants; they calmly turned out their cattle to graze before the walls, mortified their enemies by unlading the vessels which arrived daily from England unmolested by the Burgundian navy, and seizing upon a fleet of hulks filled with stones, which was intended to choke up the harbour, broke up the vessels and carried the wood away for fuel, to the astonishment of the admiral, by whose clumsiness this notable contrivance, instead of the anticipated damage, afforded a cheap triumph to the enemy. CHAP. III.

The report of the Duke of Burgundy's meditated attempt upon Calais rendered Gloucester, who ardently desired to signalize himself in deeds of arms, more than ever anxious to oppose him in the field, and at his particular request he was appointed to the command of an army to be raised for the defence of the town. Apprehensive that Burgundy would abandon the enterprize before he could sail from England, he dispatched a herald to the duke, to say, that with God's permission he would very shortly attack him and his whole army if he would await his arrival; and should he raise the siege and depart, he would seek him in his own territories. The herald concluded by expressing the regret of the prince his master, that he could not fix upon any day for his landing, as that must depend upon the winds, which were unsteady, and would not allow him to cross the sea at his pleasure. The Duke of Burgundy replied, that Gloucester would not be compelled to seek him in any other place; and unless some misfortune should befall him, he should be

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found before the walls of Calais. But though so often on the point of encountering each other, these princes never actually met in arms.

The Flemings discomfited by the failure of their egregious expectations, and vexed by the losses which they daily sustained in their skirmishes with the enemy, began to murmur amongst themselves; they were farther incensed by the conduct of the admiral, who instead of bringing up his ships to co-operate with the land forces, sailed away, the waves being too rough to allow him to remain long before Calais, and moreover feeling himself too weak to cope with the fleet preparing in the English ports to dispute the sea with him.*

The factious spirit and contempt of subordination which characterized the Flemings, speedily displayed itself. The Duke of Burgundy unsuspicious of the gathering storm engaged actively in raising new levies; he caused accurate surveys of the ground to be made, in expectation of a battle with Gloucester, and proposed a plan of operations to his council which met with universal approbation; but the hopes he cherished from these judicious arrangements were suddenly and utterly destroyed by the revolt of a part of his troops. On the very day in which the council had been convened the besieged made a spirited sally, directing their arms against a block-house, a work constructed by the Burgundians upon an eminence near Calais, from whence they could command a view of the town. Nearly four hundred of the men of Ghent had been selected to garrison and protect this place; upon the unexpected advance of

* Monstrelet.

the English they gave so loud an alarm that the whole Burgundian camp were put into confusion, and flew hastily to arms. Vast multitudes rushed promiscuously to the defence of the block-house, even the duke himself speeded thither on foot; but before any effective measure could be taken for its relief it was stormed by the English, whose vigorous assault had been very weakly repelled: one hundred and twenty of the garrison were put to the sword, and nearly the whole of the remainder fell into the enemy's hands, and being conducted prisoners to Calais several were slain before the gates, in revenge for the loss of an English knight whom the Picards had taken in the action and killed after his surrender. The men of Ghent dismayed by the slaughter of their comrades, and perceiving that the capture of Calais was not so easy an achievement as they had fondly flattered themselves it would have been, became totally ungovernable; they filled the camp with their clamorous outcries, and vehemently expressed their determination to strike their colours and return home. The Duke of Burgundy made a fruitless attempt to appease them: they were deaf to entreaty and remonstrance; it was in vain that he declared to them that his honour stood pledged to abide the meeting with the Duke of Gloucester, they preferred their own safety to the reputation of their sovereign, and finding it impossible to persuade these base recreants to lend him any farther assistance, he only urged them to remain until the morrow to afford him time to conduct their retreat in good order, offering to escort them in person as far as Gravelines. They gave the promise which he re-

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quired, but by their turbulent conduct raised a mutiny in the camp, which broke up in a tumultuous manner, and leaving a large portion of provisions, wine, and even their own effects behind them, followed by the men of Bruges, and other parts of Flanders, they commenced their disorderly flight.*

1437. The Duke of Burgundy, overwhelmed with grief, put himself and his men-at-arms in battle array to cover the retreat of the fugitives, and to prevent the English garrison from sallying out in pursuit of their flying foes. The duke compelled to form his most experienced soldiers into a rear guard instead of leading them against the English, dispirited, and hopeless of sustaining a combat with an enemy flushed with their recent triumphs, followed the panic struck Flemings so far that Gloucester who landed in Picardy at the head of ten thousand men a few days after the siege of Calais had been raised, though using the utmost diligence could not overtake him, and after devastating the country in his sweeping march, was obliged by the sickness of his troops to return and place them in secure quarters. The garrisons of Calais and Guisnes, who marked the disgraceful retreat of the besieging army with exulting shouts, rushed out to seize upon the baggage and military stores which they had abandoned in their haste, and obtained a considerable booty.

From this period the war languished upon the continent; the English and the Burgundians consented to a suspension of hostilities, and the break-

* Monstrelet.

ing out of the plague, which ravaged France and England, prevented the belligerent powers from being in a condition to take the field. Two years afterwards, 1439, Talbot retook Harfleur, and the Count de Richemont, constable of France, signalized himself in some brilliant exploits which were however of trifling national importance.* CHAP. III.

In the year 1437, England had been deprived by death of its two dowager queens, Jane of Navarre, the widow of Henry IV., and Catherine of Anjou, the wife of Owen Tudor. The former expired at Havering Bower, and was buried by her husband's side in his magnificent tomb at Canterbury. Catherine, who had degraded herself in the eyes of the nation by her hasty second marriage, was interred, though with little pomp, in Westminster Abbey; and she was unfortunate in the choice of a sepulchre, for her body was removed at the erection of the chapel of Henry VII., when the monarch, though usually paying profound respect to the memory of the princes of the House of Lancaster, suffered it to remain above ground; a sacrilege respecting which some of the old writers do not scruple to teach that it was permitted as a punishment for Catharine's disobedience, in selecting Windsor Castle for the birthplace of her son, against the strict commands of the too prophetic Henry. Catharine survived her mother, Isabel of Bavaria, the dowager Queen of France, only a few years. That once honoured and haughty princess died in great poverty in Paris, unesteemed and unlamented by the nation whose ruin she had so nearly effected. She was buried in the church of

* Monstrelet.

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St. Denis, but her obsequies were not celebrated with the pomp usually observed in France at the interment of a crowned head. The Duke of Burgundy upon being made acquainted with her decease honoured her memory by a grand and solemn mass, which at his command was performed by the bishop, at the church of St. Waast, at Arras, at which he attended in person, dressed in deep mourning, and supported by the Count d'Estampes, the Count de Vendome, the heir of the Duke of Cleves, and many other ecclesiastical and secular lords, also in funereal robes.*

* Monstrelet.

CHAPTER IV.

Ill Effects of Henry's Education—Errors of his Government—Injudicious Gifts to his Favourites—Anger of the Duke of Buckingham—Character of the Duke of Warwick—Henry's pecuniary Embarrassments—Description of the Jewels pledged to Cardinal Beaufort—Suffolk and the Queen usurp all the Patronage—Henry's Love of the Chace—Neglect of the Tilt by the Warriors of his Time—Henry's Place amid the royal Authors—his Love of Literature—Gloucester's Patronage of Letters—his Collection of Books—Lydgate's Poetry—Versatility of his Talents—his Gallantry to the Fair Sex—his Travels—multiplicity of his Compositions—Other Poets of the Time—MSS. collected by the Duke of Bedford—Decay of Learning—Queen's College, Cambridge, founded by Margaret—and completed by Elizabeth Wydeville—The Ordeal of Battle—Appeals of Treason—Massacre of the Bishop of Salisbury—and of the Bishop of Gloucester—Riot upon St. Bartholomew's Day—Gallantry of the Lord Mayor—Brawl in Holborn—Hall's Account of an Affray between an English Merchant and an Italian—Female Deputation to Parliament—Murder perpetrated by Women in Whitechapel—Wrongs sustained by wealthy Heiresses—Laws of Chivalry—Religious Persecution—Crimes of the Priesthood—Errors of the Church—Humble Station of the Reformers—Execution of six Martyrs—Conduct of the Lollards at St. Albans—Imprisonment of Reginald Peacocke—Support afforded to the Church by the House of York—Embassy from the Pope—Portents preceding the Civil Wars.

CHAP. IV.

THE abject state of tutelage in which Henry VI. was detained by an overbearing council, formed a subject of animadversion at the neighbouring courts. Upon the king's marriage with Margaret of Anjou,

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the father of the bride advised his daughter to take her husband out of the hands of his too officious guardians; but though Margaret acted promptly and vigorously upon this suggestion, the time had elapsed in which the king might have profited by his release from the iron sway which had entered into his soul. Henry's spirit was broken, his ardour checked, and his intellects, not cultivated nor permitted to expand, were wasted upon trivial occupations and pursuits which were either absurd or injudicious; yet during his long and most inglorious reign, there were moments of strong excitement; when roused to exertion the brighter genius of his ancestors displayed itself, and shewed that beneath a sterile soil were implanted seeds of great promise, which only required the fostering hand of care to have put out branches and buds which would have ripened into flowers and fruit. Long accustomed to passive obedience, Henry at his marriage only quitted slavery under his ministers for a state of subjection as servile to a more dangerous guide—an imperious, woman, whose spirit far outstripped her discretion, and who linked her husband to ruin with a more indissoluble chain than that which previously bound him, since he might have been rescued by the nation from the evil councillors who thronged his cabinet; but could have no chance of escape, except by death, from the rash adviser who was for ever at his side.

With his own virtuous inclinations, Henry's government would have been mild, and fortunate, had his ministers possessed more wisdom and more honesty; but from the waste and mismanagement of

the revenue, the oppressive weight of the taxes, and the shameless rapacity of those appointed to levy these odious burthens, very direful consequences arose, and even Henry's most rational and beneficial employments became burthensome to the nation. The beautiful structure at Cambridge, King's College Chapel, a monument of the monarch's taste for the quietude of learned repose, his love of science, and his paternal regard for the best interests of posterity, was undertaken without the slightest calculation of the expense, at a period in which nothing, save a system founded upon the most rigid economy, could have placed the pecuniary affairs of the government in a flourishing condition.

Henry's personal attachments to those around him were very strong, but almost every indication of the goodness of his heart was linked with some weakness, more the offspring of misdirected feelings than of natural imbecility; his kindest and most affectionate gifts to his friends were often in his zeal to enhance their value productive of mortification or insult to others. Not content with raising his favourites to the peerage, he frequently gave them precedence above the ancient nobles of his court:* to his half brothers Jasper Earl of Pembroke, and Edmund Earl of Richmond, he granted the invidious right of sitting in parliament next to the dukes. Besides the successive dignities of marquis and of duke conferred upon Suffolk, he gave to him and his heirs male, the privilege of bearing a wand of gold surmounted by a dove, at the coronation of the king, and an ivory wand of similar form at the

* Dugdale.

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coronation of the Queen of England, whenever it might take place, a distinction which was beheld by the representatives of older families with an envious eye.

The injudicious honour conferred upon Henry Earl of Warwick, the son of the king's late governor, the chivalric Richard Beauchamp, has been already mentioned as the source of jealousy and dispute upon the part of the Duke of Buckingham, who was entitled by his ducal rank and his descent from a line ennobled during many preceding generations, to the highest seat in parliament next to the princes of the blood. Henry had already placed his favourite at the head of the earls, without giving any consideration to their superior claims; and he farther distinguished him from his equals in the peerage, by permitting him to wear a coronet of gold upon his head, "as well in the royal presence as elsewhere." When advanced with similar privileges to the rank of a duke, Henry in the open indignation of Buckingham, perceived his error, and was obliged to qualify his rash grant by conditions which produced submission without satisfying either party. The king endeavoured to make the new duke amends for the partial disappointment of his ambition, by lavish gifts of lands and dignities; he bestowed upon him the grant of Jersey, Guernsey, and their dependencies, upon the payment of the yearly rent of a rose, to be presented at the feast of the nativity of St. John the Baptist, and consoled himself for the loss of the regal diadem of France, and all its valuable fiefs, by giving away a sovreignty to this highly favoured nobleman, who with his own hands he crowned King of the Isle of

Wight.* Henry Beauchamp whom the monarch had dignified by so many proofs of his affection is described by Dugdale as a youth of promise, who before he had attained his nineteenth year, offered his services in defence of Guienne. His early death vested his immense possessions in the hands of his sister, by whose marriage with Richard Nevill, a close connection of the House of York, the monarch's munificent grants were turned against his throne.

Early impressed with exalted ideas of the liberality so well becoming a crowned head, it is perhaps always difficult for the justice of a king to keep pace with his generosity. Henry was deeply in debt to all his commanders in the French wars; campaigns which were ruinous to the sovereigns and the nation in consequence of the misapplication of spoils wholly relinquished to the captors of cities, towns and castles, and the governors of provinces, instead of being more wisely appropriated to the support of the army. France might assuredly have been maintained without the slightest expense to the conquering country; but measures which would have reduced the enormous profits of mercenary nobles to their proper limits, might have been too hazardous even for the attempt of the boldest and most able minister, in an age in which public opinion had little influence over the minds of the rich and great, and public good was rarely if ever considered. Henry therefore was only culpable in the indulgence of liberality which deprived him of the power of discharging the demands of those from whom he had

* Dugdale.

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actually borrowed money, or who possessed higher claims to pecuniary reward; his involvements with various persons were numerous and heavy, and he owed so large a sum to the Bishop of Winchester, that he was compelled to place the richest portion of the royal effects into his hands as a security.* The catalogue of jewels pledged by Henry in the seventeenth year of his reign to Cardinal Beaufort, contains a detailed account of many splendid and costly articles; the names and purposes of some of these are unintelligible to all save the most erudite of antiquaries; but we may form a pretty accurate idea of their beauty and value by the description of others couched in less obsolete language. A sword of gold, called the sword of Spain, garnished with a vast number of precious stones, weighing in all ten marks and a half "and half an ounce of troye;" a tablet of gold embellished with a delineation of the passion of Christ, "in ye manner of a boke," also splendidly set with gems. Another tablet of gold of St. George, which appears to have been most superbly decorated with various devices and enriched with jewels. A third, likewise of gold, of the salutation of our lady, equally splendid. Two pots of gold weighing thirty-three ounces, a chalice and two cruets, a pair of basins silver gilt and chased with roses; a large alms dish of silver gilt, made in the form of a ship, "full of men at arms fighting on the ship's side;" two large chargers and six smaller ones; forty dishes of divers sorts, and twenty-three

* Liber Memorandum Camerariorum Receptæ Icacarii; presented by John Caley, Esq. F. R. S. and S. A. to the Society of Antiquaries, and printed in vol. 21 of the Archæologia.

saucers gilt; a standing cup of gold, and a gold ewer richly garnished; a standing tablet of gold, "with an image of our lady enamelled in white on the top, and on every side an aungell, weighing twenty-seven ounces and three quarters, price every ounce xxiij*s.* iiij*d.*;" also a flat tablet of gold "with a piece of *tunica inconsutil* garnyshed with twenty-five great ples," weighing forty ounces.

Under the government of Suffolk and the queen, Henry's power of promoting his friends was considerably diminished. We are told that he was strongly attached to Stanbery Bishop of Hereford, a pious and zealous divine, and one of the most faithful adherents whom the pope possessed in England. Henry appointed this learned ecclesiastic to be his confessor, and was anxious to confer upon him the rich bishopric of Norwich; but, observes our author, "William de la Pole Duke of Suffolk was then so potent that he seized upon the valuable see for his own chaplain,"* and Henry's patronage could only extend to the poor bishopric of Bangor, with which for the present Stanbery was obliged to be content. He served the monarch diligently, and was taken prisoner while attending upon him, and suffered a long imprisonment in Warwick castle.

The chace seems to have been Henry's favourite amusement; for although tournaments are mentioned as occurring sometimes at his court, he does not appear either to have engaged himself or taken any delight in witnessing these martial exercises; and during the latter part of his reign there was too much serious fighting to render the introduction of

* Prince's Worthies of Devon.

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a mimic war in these spirit-stirring sports necessary to keep the warrior's lance from rusting, or his frame from effeminacy. The names of the king-making Warwick, of his father the brave Salisbury, of that dauntless soldier, Edward Earl of March, of Hungerford, Oxford, Pembroke, or of any of the stoutest of the Lancastrian chiefs, are never mentioned as seeking distinction at the tilt, and Lord Rivers appears to have the sole honour of supporting England's fame in this chivalric accomplishment.

Henry VI. has obtained a place amid the royal authors, but his pretensions rest upon very doubtful authority. A short poem transcribed by Sir John Harrington from a manuscript book in his grandfathers' hand-writing, was attributed to the monarch's pen, and upon this supposition Sir John Harrington imparted his discovery to Prince Henry, the eldest son of James I.

The knight observes, that the stanzas which he presents suit the temper and condition of him who composed them; but more diligent inquiry respecting their authenticity has rendered Henry's claim to the honours of a poet a very disputable point; they form a part of a legend in verse, printed in the Mirror for Magistrates in 1559, which sets forth "How Kyng Henry the syxt, a vertuous prince, was after many other miseries cruelly murdered in the Tower of London." These verses are followed by two moral sentences in prose, copied by Sir John Harrington from the same book, and signed Henrie *: Patience ys the armore and conqueste of the godlie: thys merytythe mercie when causlesse ye suffered sor-

* Parke's Edition of Walpole's Royal Authors.

erow. Noughte els ys warre bote furie and madnesse, wherein ys not advyse bote rashnesse; not ryghte, bote rage ruleth and raigneth." Had not these sage reflections appeared in conjunction with stanzas evidently borrowed from a work which very faithfully depicts the entire resignation and pacific disposition of the pious monarch, and therefore selected as singularly applicable to his temper and feelings, there would be no hesitation in pronouncing them to be the genuine effusions of his contemplative mind, especially as the learned Dr. Pegge* assures us that Henry employed his pen in original composition, and in support of his assertion states, that a manuscript manual in his possession contained "a prayer by Henry VI. of England." CHAP. IV.

The splendid foundation at Eton, and the magnificent plan for a college at Cambridge, fully entitle Henry VI. to rank as a patron of literature. Amid the monarch's contemporaries, his uncle,† Humphry Duke of Gloucester, Thomas Tiptoft Earl of Worcester, and John Whethamsted, the erudite abbot of St. Alban's, were the most zealous promoters of science: and intent upon opening fresh sources of information to the inquiring mind, spared neither pains nor expense in enriching the public libraries with new and valuable works. Lydgate, the most esteemed poet of the age, panegyrises the Duke of Gloucester's devotion to letters and condescending familiarity with learned ecclesiastics in the most glowing terms, comparing his royal patron to Julius Cæsar, who amidst the weightiest cares of state was

* Gentleman's Magazine, vol. xlix.

† Warton's History of English Poetry, vol. ii.

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not ashamed to enter the rhetorical school of Cicero at Rome. Gloucester's fame extended to distant countries; he was honoured by the esteem of all who sought to revive the drooping arts, and the most celebrated writers of France and Italy solicited and obtained his favour. Untiring in the pursuit of knowledge, and anxious to promote its best interests, had he been spared to lend his powerful assistance to the efforts made in Italy at this period for the restoration of science, England would not have relapsed into that dark night of ignorance which clouded it during so many succeeding years. The duke retained several skilful foreigners in his service, for the purpose of translating Greek authors into Latin, he acquired a magnificent collection of books by purchase, and by presents made by the superiors of monasteries, as the most effectual means of obtaining his good opinion. A few of the splendid memorials which marked the dawn of mental enfranchisement under this illustrious prince are still in existence; the greater part were destroyed by the blind fury of the reformers in the reign of Edward VI. who not staying to examine whether the illuminated manuscripts, which in the style of their decoration closely resembled monkish missals, were in reality only filled with idle legends calculated to encourage the superstition they were so desirous to extirpate, or the valuable relics of classic authors, abandoned them to the general doom.

Lydgate a monk of Bury, the master spirit of poetry in the reign of Henry VI. sang in strains far surpassing the feeble lays of Occleve, with whom he was nearly contemporary, and was no unworthy successor of Chaucer and of Gower; his fruitful pen

embraced a boundless variety of subjects, and ranging with equal felicity, from "grave to gay, from lively to severe," distinguished all his various compositions with some peculiar beauty: possessing vast command of thought and language, his images, of which many approach to the sublime, are expressed with much fluency and clearness, they follow each other with the flowing rapidity which marks the inspiration of genius; and although he falls short of the energy and pathos of his tuneful predecessor, he nearly equals him in the magnificence of his descriptions. The poet's delineations of allegorical personages are exceedingly spirited and striking, nor is he less skilful in depicting human crimes and human wretchedness; touched by his magic wand a monstrous image of Fortune starts up, with eyes like stars, dispensing with her hundred hands, flowers of summer's brightest prime, and ebon chalices of tears. Again adjured by the same wizard spell, a pale spectre glides along, her hair dishevelled, her drapery torn and disarrayed, and nothing regal left her, save her grief—the shade of Queen Brunhilda, whose tragic story is very dramatically told. In celebrating the power, the glory, the love, and mercy of the Deity, Lydgate soars with his subject to a style of grandeur which has seldom been surpassed, nor is he less felicitous in his diction when descending to earthly things; his landscapes glow with sunshine, his castles arise in gothic splendour, his knights are the mirrors of courtesy, and his heroines, whether in their triumph or in their distress, are invested with charms and feelings truly feminine. Shining alike in the sublime, the beautiful, and the picturesque, Lydgate also possessed no inconsi-

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derable portion of wit; a ballad describing the adventures which befel a rustic tempted to leave his native fields to roam about the metropolis, is replete with humour, and presents a lively illustration of the manners and fashions of the age: indeed the whole of the writer's voluminous works are valuable for the pictures which they afford of the habits, modes, tastes, and feelings of his own times. In his translation of the Boke of Troye, he introduces all the favourite accompaniments of the middle ages; his canvas is filled with feudal personages and feudal incidents; the classic heroes of antiquity appear in the garb of knighthood, and this pomp of chivalry is enriched with the splendid fictions derived from the wild and wondrous legends of the east.

In Lydgate's praise it must be said, that even the polite and gallant Antony Wydeville Earl Rivers was surpassed in the tenderness of his regard for the female character by this courteous monk. The errant knight was content to omit in his translation of the Dictes of the Philosophers, his author's satirical remarks upon women; but Lydgate, while also refusing to spread the slanderous aspersions of Colonna in a new language, becomes the champion of the injured sex, and praises, as befits an ecclesiastic bound by holy vows to view their outward charms and graces with a stoic's eye, their purity, fortitude, and piety, and brings forward to prove the justice of his eulogium, examples drawn from histories universally accredited. The general licentiousness ascribed by their libeller, to women, is triumphantly refuted by the glorious martyrdom of the eleven thousand virgins of Cologne, a tale devoutly believed, and

tending to promote the respect and veneration for female virtue which formed one of the distinguishing features of that beautiful moral code, which sprang up in the rudest days of gothic barbarism, and though but too often derided or neglected, imposed a wholesome restraint upon the headstrong passions of men, who regarded no other laws save those of honour.

Lydgate took the vows of a Benedictine order of monks, and entered upon his academical career at Oxford: he improved his mind by travel into France and Italy, the lands of song, drawing his inspiration from the fountain head of poesy. He read the works of Dante, Bocaccio, and Alain Chartier, in their original languages, but was no servile copyist of the masters whom he studied with so much advantage. Returning to his native country deeply versed in foreign literature, he was speedily celebrated for his learning, and his monastery became the resort of all those persons whose ideas soaring above a hawk or a hound, or a Damascus blade, were desirous of acquiring polite knowledge. Lydgate professed to teach philology, and added to his accomplishments as a poet those of a rhetorician, a geometrician, an astronomer, and a theologian.*

Besides Lydgate's three principal works, the Fall of Princes, the Seige of Thebes, and the Destruction of Troy, he wrote the Lyfe of our Lady, of which there is a version printed by Caxton. The Dance of Death. A series of poems in honour of St. Edmund, the patron of his own monastery at Bury, which with its beautiful illuminations is pre-

* Warton's History of Poetry.

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served in the British Museum. A translation of the legendary history of another saint, from the Latin, undertaken at the desire of the liberal Whethamstede, the Abbot of St. Albans, and a poem called the Pilgrims, dedicated to Thomas Montacute Earl of Salisbury, and embellished with a portrait of the author presenting his work to his noble patron, who is represented in a suit of gilt armour, also a part of the splendid collection of manuscripts which form the treasures of the Museum library. But while not employed in these important works, Lydgate's pen was never for a moment idle; his verses were extremely popular, and in such general request that, as it is truly stated by Warton, "he was not only the poet of his monastery but of the world in general. If a disguising was intended by the company of goldsmiths, a mask before his majesty at Eltham, a May game for the sheriffs and aldermen of London, a mumming before the lord mayor, a procession of pageants from the creation for the festival of Corpus Christi, or a carol for the coronation, Lydgate was consulted and gave the poetry."

At an immeasurable distance from Lydgate followed Hugh Campeden and Thomas Chartre, to whom however their country was indebted for two metrical romances, both translated from the French, the one entitled "The Historie of Kynge Boccus and Sydracke," the other the adventures of "Sir Linfale," one of Arthur's knights, but neither rising above mediocrity in thought or diction. To this scanty catalogue can only be added a few obscure versifiers, who destitute of Lydgate's genius prepared the dull orations delivered by those senten-

tious moralists, who figuring in some clumsy pageant vexed the ears of monarchs from the corners of the streets, or who wrote unintelligible rhymes for Sotelties, or composed ribald ballads against unpopular ministers or unpopular creeds, in a style of cold and savage barbarity as coarse and disgusting as the uncouth phraseology in which they were conveyed.

Amid the cares and tumults of war the Duke of Bedford was not inattentive to the interests of literature; he employed his wealth and influence in procuring manuscripts from a country made vocal by the lays of the troubadours; but these treasures of romance and legendary lore, as well as the more classic collections made in Italy by the Earl of Worcester, were for many years confined to the learned few who dwelled apart from the busy world in academic retirement, during those fierce civil contentions which exclusively occupied the thoughts of the higher and middle classes, and rendered them so totally regardless of mental acquirements, that at the accession of Henry VII. there were knights and nobles at his court who could scarcely read.

Queen Margaret, who had early imbibed a taste for letters from her amiable and accomplished father Regnier, had more peaceable times permitted the devotion of her talents to the cause, would have promoted and encouraged the revival of the fine arts. Queen's College at Cambridge owes its foundation to this magnificent princess; but compelled to neglect and finally to abandon the work by those absorbing events which demanded all the ardour of

CHAP. IV. her lion heart, Elizabeth Wydeville, the scarcely less unfortunate partner of Edward's throne, obtained the honour of finishing the structure.

Trials by battle were of frequent occurrence during the early part of the reign of Henry VI. Stow tells us, that on the twenty-fourth of January 1430, two men of Feversham in Kent appeared in arms before the king, within the lists at Smithfield. John Upton a notary, the appellant, charged his adversary with imagining the monarch's death upon the day of his coronation, and the accused offering to prove his innocence by single combat, they were permitted to try the ordeal, and having, says the historian, "long fought, the king took up the matter and forgave both parties." *In 1446 another and a more fatal battle took place upon the same spot. John David, the servant of an armourer named William Catur, appealed his master of treason; the accused being much beloved by his friends and neighbours fell a sacrifice to their injudicious kindness; anxious to enflame his courage they plied him with so many potent draughts of wine, that he became too much intoxicated to defend himself, and speedily sank under the more vigorous arm of his opponent. His guiltlessness of the charge imputed to him is attested by all the old chroniclers, and they rejoice over the punishment which speedily followed the crime of the false servant, who was shortly afterwards convicted of felony, and hanged at Tyburn; but Shakspeare attending more to poetical justice than to the less dramatic facts of this melancholy narrative has consigned the vanquished to utter ignominy, and made him confess the treason with his dying breath.

* Stow's Chronicle.

According to custom, the body of the unfortunate armoured was delivered into the hands of the executioner, and underwent the sentence of the law upon a public scaffold. CHAP. IV.

Where the accusation did not involve a capital charge, those who though defeated survived the combat, were merely deprived of their arms, and led disgracefully from the lists: for the more serious offences of murder and treason a severer doom was inflicted, the vanquished being either dead or alive adjudged to be drawn from the field, and hanged or beheaded at the pleasure of the sovereign.

A duel between more illustrious combatants was prevented by the interposition of the clergy. Thomas Fitz Thomas prior of Kilmaine, appealed Sir James Butler Earl of Ormond of treason, a day was assigned for the battle, and the lists prepared in Smithfield; but the representations of several learned ecclesiastics induced Henry to revoke his permission, and to take the quarrel into his own hands.

The incapacity of the government of Henry VI. was manifested by the continual occurrence of public insurrections and private brawls. The murder of the Bishop of Salisbury was perpetrated by his own tenants at Eddington in Wiltshire, in 1450. The ill-fated prelate, while engaged in celebrating mass, was dragged from the high altar arrayed in pontifical vestments, and most inhumanly slaughtered by his furious assailants,* who stripping the mangled corse of its blood-stained shirt, tore it in pieces, each carrying a portion away as a trophy of the brutal deed. Having thus ruthlessly deprived their pastor

* Stow.

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of life, the assassins gratified their avarice in the plunder of his mansion, and are said to have carried away no less a sum than ten thousand marks. The bishop's mutilated corse was afterwards deposited in the parish church of Eddington, "without a stone to mark the spot."* Adam Moleyns Bishop of Gloucester, who had retired from the cabinet in the hope of avoiding the storm which he saw gathering against Suffolk and his colleagues, shared the same fate from the hands of the infuriated populace at Portsmouth, whence with the avowed intention of performing a pilgrimage, he was endeavouring to escape to some more secure asylum upon the continent. Literature lost another patron in the learned prelate so inhumanly sacrificed to popular hatred.

The laws weakly enforced were resisted by all classes, and so widely was the spirit of insubordination disseminated, that even the clergy encouraged disobedience to the civil authorities by their haughty defiance of the magistracy. †In 1452, upon St. Bartholomew's day, the mayor and sheriffs of London according to ancient custom presided at a wrestling match at a place appointed for the exercise near Moorfields, it being their duty to distribute the prizes to the victors. The Prior of St. John's monastery was also present, and a servant belonging to this turbulent ecclesiastic, not brooking, says the historian "the disgrace to be foiled before his master," insisted, against the laws of the sport, to be permitted a second trial. A quarrel ensued between the disputants, and from eager remonstrances they proceeded to fight in earnest. The mayor, after vainly

* Britton. † Daniell's Histories.

endeavouring to preserve the peace by gentle means, pursued more vigorous measures, and perceiving that the prior abetted the insolence of his follower, ordered one of the sheriffs to take the offender into custody: his comrades instantly attempted a rescue, and the mayor and his party were obliged to rush to the assistance of the sheriffs. During the struggle, the prior hastened to St. John's, and dispatched from thence and its neighbourhood in Clerkenwell, a troop of bowmen, under the guidance of a ruffian, who is described as "a desperate swaggerer," against the mayor, and this reinforcement we are told occasioned "great bloodshed and some slaughter." The life of Sir John Norman, London's gallant chief magistrate, was in imminent danger from an arrow which pierced his cap; but with the aid of the bystanders he valiantly maintained the field, and having succeeded in capturing the ringleaders, he sent them under safe custody to Newgate, and then retiring calmly to his pavilion commanded that the sports should be renewed. But many of the combatants were severely injured, and others too much out of breath to pursue the exercise, yet though his presence was now unnecessary the victor refused to quit the scene of the outrage, observing to his companions, that he would remain in order to make trial of the attachment of the citizens towards him, since they had now an opportunity of evincing either their affection or their indifference. The suspense of the mayor was not of long duration, for the instant that a rumour of his jeopardy was spread abroad, the burgesses assembled in vast numbers, and with banners displayed marched to the field and

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conveyed him home in triumph. "Upon the neck of this tumult," observes the historian, "began the quarrel in Holborn betwixt the gentlemen of the Inns of Chancery and some citizens, in appeasing of which the queen's attorney and three more were slain."*

The affray occasioned by a person named Harbottle, belonging to Clifford's Inn, began in the night, and lasted until the following day with great fury and fierceness on both sides. The mayor and the sheriffs alarmed by the report of the riot, hastened to the scene of action with a strong force to restore the peace, and succeeded in quelling a disturbance which, says our author, "by party-making was likely to have drawn in the greatest portion of the city, vast numbers flocking to the aid of their friends on either side."† The manuscript chronicle of London in recording the circumstance, states that the law students were driven by archers from the standard in Fleet-street into their inns. William Tailor, alderman of the ward, apparently one of the ringleaders, and several others were taken into custody and imprisoned in Windsor Castle. Another, but a less fatal tumult occurred at the election of the lord mayor. The popular candidate being unsuccessful, the assembly manifested their discontent by loud murmurings and threats. The spirit and promptitude of the chief magistrate fortunately prevented serious consequences from this ebullition of feeling. He commanded the sheriffs to apprehend some of the most clamorous and furious, and his orders being instantly executed, twelve or sixteen of the muti-

* Daniell. † Harleian Coll. 565.

neers were lodged in Newgate, and punished for their disorderly conduct by fine and imprisonment. CHAP. IV.

In 1455, the city of London again became a scene of bloodshed and disorder, in consequence of the revengeful spirit of a young English merchant, who refused to tolerate in a stranger a privilege which he had been denied in foreign countries; but the story though involving much of cruelty and barbarism, is made so entertaining by Hall's relation, that it must be given in his own words. "A young marchaunt whiche before tyme had been in diuerse citees within the countrey of Italy, and there prohibited by the magistrates and rulers, to vse or weare any weapon inuasiue or defensiue, chalenged an Italian in Cheapside, for wearyng of a dagger, confutyng hym with the lawes of his owne country, whiche, like a cole-ricke knave and presompteous persone, so disdainfully and with such tauntes and checkes, aunswered the merchaunt, that he, not willing to suffre so open a reproache in so publicke a streete, and that of so proud a villain, toke by force from him his dagger, and with the same a little cut his crowne and cracked his pate. This Italian in greate hast, complained to the mayor of this offence, whiche at the nexte courte, holden at the Guyldhaule, by the consente of the whole senate, sent for the offender, and declaryng to hym his crime, commaunded hym to ward, whereof diuerse other light marchauntes within the citee, sore abhorryng the Italian nacion for lickyng the fat from their beardes, and taking from them their accustomed liuyng, by reason that the said estrangers imported and transported, into and oute of this realme, all suche merchandizes and

CHAP. IV.

commodities, and necessaries, as henglishmen onely war accustomed to do, assembled together in greate plumpes, and by force compelled the maire to deliuer the prisoner out of Newgate; and yet this multitude with this doyng, nothing saciate nor appeased, like madde persons and frantique fooles ranne to the seuerall houses of diuerce Venecians, Lucases, and Florentynes, and theim spoyled, robbed and riffled, without reason or measure. The Maire perceivyng this greate enormity assembled a greate number of substanciell and grave citizens, which, not without greate bloodshed and maymyng of sundery persons, finally appeased their rage, and caused the people to depart to their houses.

"The beginner of this temerarious commocion and sodain vprore, either persuaded by his frendes or fearyng his chaunce, whiche for his first facte might sodainly insue, departed to Westminster and there registered himself as a sanctuary man. The queen, which ruled all thynges, hearyng of this greate riot and unlawfull misdemeanour, sent the Dukes of Exeter and Buckyngham, accompanied with many other noblemen to London, with a commission of oyer and determiner for the punishement of this outragious defence and sedicious crime. When the maire of the citee, the two dukes, and the two chief iustices wer set in the Guyldehaule for the performance of their commissions and began to call the empanelles, for the enquiry, as the vse and order is, diuerse light-witted and lesse-brained persones of the citee priuely armed themselves, and by ringing of Bow bel thought to assemble together a great multitude of their mind and opinion, and so

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by force and might to take from the kepers all such prisoners as were before apprehended for the late-committed robbery and riot, as they were goyng to their trial or arreignment. But this greate tumult and sodain fury was, by discrete and sage citizens, a litle and litle appeased and finally quenched; but in the meane season, the dukes and other commissioners, being vntrewly aduertized that they were in ieopardy of their lifes, sodaynly departed from the Guyldhaule and left their enquiry for that day. The mayre the next day perceiuing how the grudge rose, called a common counsail, wherof the number was I,c iiij score and od persones, and by auctoritie of the same ordeyned that all wardeins of misteries should assemble their felowship in their particuler hawles, where they should exhort them to the obseruacion of the kynge's peace, and kepyng of good order within the citie; and if they espied any man either prone or redy to reyse a rumor, or desirous of the delyueraunce of suche as were accused and in captive custodie, that their names should be secretly written and couertly deliuered to the lorde mayor; which pollitique doyng finally ended the outragious doing of the insolent people, after which appeasing, the commissioners returned to Guyldhaule, where many of the robbers were attainted, and after condignly put to execution, besyde diuers great fynes and ransomes payd, which were set vpon many merchauntes for winkyng at these doyngs or assenting to the same." Stow, in relating the same story, informs us that three persons were hanged at Tyburn for robbing the house of a Lombard, two of whom

CHAP. IV.

were sanctuary men, registered at St. Martin's-le-Grand, the third "a shipman."

The female part of the community were not, in this turbulent period, tamely quiescent when the sex sustained neglect, injury or insult, but arrogated to themselves the right of redressing the wrongs of the sufferer or, if that were impracticable, of remonstrating with the offender in whatsoever station of power or dignity he might be. Accordingly we hear that in the parliament held in 1428, when the ardour of the Duke of Gloucester's passion for the Duchess of Brabant having cooled, he left her unaided to struggle with fierce and potent enemies, "There was one Mistress Stokes, with divers other stout women of London, of good reckoning, well apparelled, came openly to the upper parliament and delivered letters to the Duke of Gloucester, and to the archbishop, and to the other lords, containing matter of rebuke and sharp reprehension of the Duke of Gloucester, because he would not deliver his wife Jacqueline out of her grievous imprisonment, being held prisoner by the Duke of Burgundy, suffering her there to remain so unkindly: and for his publicly keeping by him another adultress, contrary to the law of God and the honourable state of matrimony. But what good success," continues the historian, "their labours took my author reporteth not."*

A more terrible example of feminine vengeance occurred in 1431. The summary and fearful punishment of a deed of base ingratitude inflicted by the

* Stow.

amazons of Whitechapel is recorded by Fabian and Holinshed; the offender was a Breton, who being reduced to poverty and distress, had received much kindness from a charitable woman of the parish, who we are told by the former writer, afforded him an asylum beneath her own roof, from the most compassionate motives. The heartless wretch, tempted by the property which the house contained, murdered his benefactress in her bed and carried off the spoil. Swift retribution followed the crime, the miscreant was closely pursued, and dragged with his ill-gotten wealth from a church wherein he had taken refuge. In the interim the atrocious act of which he had been guilty was blazoned abroad, and the women of the parish aware of the extent of his aggression, forgot all the softer feelings of their sex in the stern ardour of their justice, and rushing upon him with the fury of she-wolves, as he passed through Aldgate, on his way to prison, notwithstanding the resistance of the constables, "they so bethwachked him," says Holinshed, "with stones, stakes, kennel doong, and other things, that they laid him a stretching and rid him of life."

Though nothing can excuse the horrid thirst for blood evinced by these female fiends, the conduct of the male part of the creation towards the weaker sex frequently merited punishment, equally relentless and sanguinary. The unfortunate possessors of beauty or of gold sustained the most flagrant outrages from the avarice and the more brutal passions of men, who set the slight protection of laws, irregularly administered, at defiance, when tempted to possess themselves by force of the persons and

CHAP. IV.

estates of wealthy heiresses, or richly jointured widows. The latter were frequently obliged, against their inclination, to accept a second husband, in order to avoid the danger of a more cruel fate, to which their property exposed them; and though an act was passed in the reign of Henry VI. which rendered the constraint too often employed to compel a reluctant hand in marriage a capital offence, it was frequently committed. The Parliament Rolls of this period contain numerous relations of the most heartless and savage barbarity perpetrated upon defenceless women, by those who are wont to style themselves their protectors, and it was doubtless the constant recurrence of similar deeds, which in former times occasioned the institution of chivalry, and the obligation of the knightly oath, so often violated, to revere feminine chastity, and to right feminine wrongs: the sole defence of the weak against the strong under the feudal system, which, reared by the savage conquerors of the north, permitted the rich and great to tyrannize over their fellow creatures with impunity. Nothing in this state of affairs could have been imagined more beautiful or more appropriate than a code of laws which appealed to all the finest feelings of the mind, and rendered honour the sole arbiter and judge in every action of life; society could scarcely have existed without it during a period of such universal licentiousness, and where it obtained the influence due to its merits it produced the most exalted characters upon record; but although the history of the middle ages afford numberless instances of the noblest actions resulting from this exquisite social compact, and

although it most assuredly softened and refined the manners, yet the duties imposed were frequently entirely disregarded by men who were suffered unreproved to disgrace the order of knighthood, by deeds completely at variance with its most sacred engagements. Undaunted bravery and military talents in the field often constituted the sole pretensions of those nobles, whose claims to the golden spurs were never called in question, and its inadequacy to produce the desired end became so glaringly apparent, that as mental illumination extended its light over the world, and the legislative authorities became strengthened and supported, the whole gorgeous fabric melted away, leaving scarcely a vestige of its grace and grandeur behind. Chivalry is now only a name, and while we rejoice that the rigid administration of the laws render its interference almost unnecessary, we cannot but regret that so little of its spirit should remain to incite the young and ardent to generous actions.

Religion assumed a gloomy aspect under the House of Lancaster. Henry IV. repressed the early efforts of the reformers through policy to prop his defective title with the papal power; his son espoused the cause from purer motives and, though his piety degenerated into bigotry, acted from an earnest desire to advance the best interests of religion. Henry VI. priest-ridden from his youth, was the slave of superstition, and notwithstanding the aversion which his mild spirit entertained to every species of persecution, under his government the fires of Smithfield burned more fiercely than ever. Equally inveterate as their predecessors against the creed of

CHAP. IV.

Wickliffe, there were no bright luminaries in the Church during Henry's reign, to shed lustre upon the faith which they professed; and though many prelates publicly lamented the general corruption of manners which pervaded the whole mass of the clergy, and strove feebly yet sincerely to effect a reformation in the lives of men whose dissolute conduct disgraced their holy office, they were miserably negligent of the means whereby so desirable an object might have been attained. Persons grossly ignorant or openly irreverend were admitted into the priesthood, and while fiercely defending their privileges, and upholding with obstinate tenacity the pretended infallibility of their erring synods and councils, they exposed the monstrous system of fraud and folly which deformed those pure doctrines preached by the apostolic church. Blind to the true interests of the establishment, the prelacy disdained to alter or amend a single abuse which troubled the souls of conscientious persons; had they gradually and temperately purified their creed from its cumbrous traditions and superstitious rites, and preferred the light of the Gospel to the dark clouds of prejudice, it would have stood firm against all the efforts of its enemies; but they despised their opponents, scorned the lesson which they taught, and exerted the inordinate power which they had usurped to crush and to destroy them. It was not from the rich and the great, who might have viewed their possessions with envious and their dignities with jealous eyes, that the Roman Catholic prelacy sustained attack; the unequal combat was waged by a few humble but enlightened priests, who chose to

obey the commands of the scriptures rather than the decrees of the pope, and persons in the lower ranks of life anxious to be released from the idolatrous worship of saints and images; men who above all others would have defended a more spotless church, since it was the only path to preferment which the low-born could hope to tread; its highest dignities being in the most arbitrary period of aristocratic intolerance open to the meanest aspirant, whose ambition was flattered by the prospect of ruling by his fiat the destinies of empires and of kings. Yet notwithstanding these glittering attractions; though every other avenue to distinction was jealously barred by those who boasted noble birth, and even the long wars had failed to raise the most adventurous soldier to rank and honours, hostility to the corruptions of the church originated in the lower classes. Sir John Oldcastle's devotion to Lollardism formed a rare and dazzling exception; his fellow martyrs were poor and of small account. After the death of John of Ghent no other prince or noble was found to advocate the cause of religious liberty, and the triumphant hierarchy revelling at ease and permitting every species of abuse, continued to burn and to persecute until it awoke the cupidity of a tyrant, who found a fair pretext in the shameless immorality of the priesthood to spoil them of their extensive possessions, and received unlimited support in every despotic act from the party whom they had so long and so cruelly oppressed.

Nothing can be more frightful than the ecclesiastical history of these times; early in Henry's

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reign six persons perished at the stake in defence of their religious opinions, and numbers who were constrained by the terror of an inhuman death, to submit to the authority claimed by the spiritual lords, were subjected to inquisitorial examination, torturing penances, and severe imprisonment.* Goaded to desperation by the unyielding hostility of the church, a few fierce spirits entertained the wild project of wresting by force the freedom which was denied to entreaty. Tumultuous assemblies of heretics arose in different places, and the Duke of Gloucester while protector, was compelled to ride to Abingdon in person to quell an insurrection headed by William Maundeville a weaver, baillie of that town, who boldly avowed his hostility to the ecclesiastical government, declaring, as Fabian informs us, that he would have "made priests' heads as cheap as sheep's heads, three a penny, or ten according to some writers."

The Lollards most assuredly injured the cause by their fanaticism, but their enemies made no distinction between the rational and moderate desires of enlightened minds and the extravagant demands of phrensied bigots, treating all who presumed to dissent from their creed with equal severity. Reginald Peacocke Bishop of Chichester, who by venturing to doubt the necessity of believing in the infallibility of the church and other disputed points, embroiled himself with his intolerant brethren, was cited to appear before the primate to answer to the charge of heresy brought against him; and although he acknowledged

* Fox.

and recanted his errors, he only purchased life by the concession, and lingered out the remainder of his days in solitary imprisonment. CHAP. IV.

During the civil wars the public mind was diverted from religious controversy, and the dispirited Lollards made no advantage of the unsettled state of the government to promulgate their opinions; and as all changes in the dynasty tended to increase the power and the influence of the clergy, the house of York like that of Lancaster, fearing to offend so formidable a body, multiplied their privileges and immunities, and gave them even more unlimited controul over the lives of their opponents than they had hitherto possessed.

But while the ecclesiastical body clamorously asserted the absolute authority of the Pope, they were not equally active in the payment of those taxes which the See of Rome claimed the right of imposing on the priesthood of every country under its dominion. Apprehensive that some difficulty might occur in collecting a large sum of money levied at his own discretion, Pope Eugenius was induced by the devotion which Henry VI. manifested to the church, to present him with one of those cheap baubles so acceptable to minds reduced by superstition to a state of imbecility, a consecrated golden rose; whose mystical meaning was explained, whose virtues were lauded, and whose inestimable value was ostentatiously set forth in a bull which accompanied it, and in which the king was exhorted to unite with other Christian princes against the triumphant arms of the Turkish infidels, and to exert his influence over the

CHAP. IV.

clergy to prevail upon them to submit cheerfully to the new burthens which his exigencies obliged him to impose.* The Archbishop of Canterbury who likewise filled the high office of Chancellor of England, lavished all his eloquence in extolling the beauties and virtues of the rose, speaking briefly upon the less agreeable subject of the tax, which he peremptorily suspended, alleging as a reason the necessity of some farther consultations with the pope, by persons whom the king intended to dispatch to Rome for the purpose, and Henry being still less able than any of the other Christian powers to make any attempt to humble the pride of the crescent, the Greek empire was crushed by the victorious moslem, and Mahomet II. planted his proud banner upon the walls of Constantinople.

The fierce domestic strife which in the deadly contests of the houses of York and Lancaster rendered England one wide battle field, was, according to the old chronicles, ushered in by portents and prodigies of strange and fearful solemnity; and whether these extraordinary occurrences were merely the invention of persons delighting in wild fancies, or arose from simple and natural causes, magnified into marvels by credulous minds, they shew that the darkest superstition still prevailed throughout the realm. The ominous events which are stated to have taken place in the early part of the reign of Henry VI. present only a few casualties, which though not common do not partake of the supernatural; but when the kingdom was threatened by civil war, and

* Stow.

when the disastrous consequences of the struggle for the crown had placed the Lancastrian party upon the brink of ruin, the prognostics of calamity assumed a more awful appearance, and men were taught to augur evil to the reigning family from miracles replete with horror. In the fifth year of Henry's accession to the throne, we are told that the weather was so unseasonable that it rained with little cessation from Easter until Michaelmas. In the seventeenth year the failure of the harvest obliged the people to appease the cravings of hunger with food obtained from the fern root. In the following year all the lions in the tower died, and the porter's gate of the city of London sank in the space of one night to the depth of seven feet in the earth. In 1436 a very deep river in Bedfordshire is said to have suddenly suspended its course, parting its waters in the centre and leaving its bed dry for a distance of three miles, "which wonder," continues Baker, "many thought to signify the division of the people and falling away from the king which happened shortly after." And in 1447, in addition to a blazing star which lighted the heavens with fiery splendour, there happened a more appalling sight, a monstrous bird emerged from the sea at Portland, in the presence of a vast number of persons, and clapping his wings and crowing hideously three times, turned with menacing gestures to the north, the south, and the west, before he vanished from the spectators' affrighted gaze. Many prodigious births, we are also informed, occurred about this time; and three years afterwards a shower of blood is reported to have fallen from the sky in

CHAP. IV.

Bedfordshire, dying with sanguine drops the linen spread out upon the fields to dry, a terrific portent presaging the revival of those dreadful scenes of slaughter which had strewed the earth with countless victims, and made the rivers to run crimson with human gore.*

* Fabian. Stow. Hall. Baker.

CHAP. IV. Bedfordshire, dying with sanguine drops the linen spread out upon the fields to dry, a terrific portent presaging the revival of those dreadful scenes of slaughter which had strewed the earth with countless victims, and made the rivers to run crimson with blue gore.*

CHAPTER V.

Edward's Government—his Attention to Commerce—Negociations with foreign Powers—Warlike Feeling of the Nation—new Method of raising Money—Edward's Fascination—Anecdote of a rich Widow—Alliance with Burgundy—Preparations against France—Strength of Edward's Army—the King claims the Crown of France—Politic Conduct of Louis—the Herald's Advice—Errors of Burgundy and the Constable—distrust of the former—Indignation of the English Army—their Discomfiture before St. Quentin—Burgundy's Departure—Edward's Courtesy to a Prisoner—Message of the Nobles—Suspicions of Louis—A counterfeit Herald—Interview with Edward's Nobles—The King enters into a Negociation—Morton one of the Commissioners—his Fidelity—Demands of the English—Preliminaries settled—Incredulity of the French Nobles—Anecdote of Louis—Burgundy's Anxiety—his Disappointment and Anger—Favours granted by Louis to the English Soldiers—their hospitable Reception—their Excesses—Meeting between Louis and Edward—their Conversation—Edward's generous Defence of the Duke of Bretagne—sumptuous Gifts of Louis—Flattery of the Courtiers—Indignation of a Gascon—Anxiety of Louis—Edward's peremptory Refusal to aid the King's Designs on Bretagne—Embarrassment of Louis—Edward's Reception in London—Contempt of his Contemporaries—Murmurs of the People—Rigorous Enforcement of the Law—The Earl of Richmond in Jeopardy—his narrow Escape—obstinate Attachment of the Lancastrian.

CHAP. V. 1474.

Edward had now witnessed the downfal of all his enemies, and securely seated upon the English throne, reigned without a rival: he drew around

CHAP. V him a brilliant circle of nobility, chiefly of his own creation, lavishing honours upon the queen's relations and his own peculiar favourites; free from the dread of an overbearing aristocracy whose gigantic power for the present he had crushed; but family dissentions embittered even these peaceful days. It was impossible for the king to satisfy the insatiate rapacity of his brothers; Clarence anxious to retain the whole of the Earl of Warwick's immense estates, had obtained the custody of the co-heiress, whom he was desirous to seclude from the world. Gloucester regardless of his kinsman's interests, in seeking to enrich himself by marriage, directed his attention to the Lady Anne. Bent upon preventing an alliance so prejudicial to his own designs, Clarence obliged his sister-in-law to assume the attire of a menial, and under the homely garb of a cook maid strove to conceal the lady from her adventurous suitor; but Gloucester's avarice, if not his affection, rendered him lynx eyed, and penetrating the disguise he became a successful wooer, carried off his prize, and placed her for effectual security in the sanctuary of St. Martin's-le-Grand.* A violent quarrel between the brothers ensued, and Edward interposing, Clarence unhesitatingly avowed the cause of his opposition, declaring that "Gloucester might marry the lady, his sister-in-law, but they would part no livelihood."† The gold enamoured bridegroom was not to be deterred from the accomplishment of his purpose, he made frequent appeals to the king, and several councils were called to appease the differences

* History of Croyla. † Fenn's Collection, vol. ii. 93.

and settle the disputes between these coveteous relations. By Sir John Paston's account, the friends of both parties were ready to draw their swords in this unhappy quarrel. "The world," he observes, "looks queasy here. For the most part that be about the king have sent hither for their harness," and then he proceeds to state that the warlike preparations of Clarence had occasioned serious uneasiness to Edward, who was determined to put an end to the feud by force, if gentle means were unavailing. CHAP. V.

At length the contending brothers submitted to discuss their respective pretensions in a more amicable manner, and to abide by the decrees of arbitrators appointed for the purpose of deciding this important cause. The lady was still living whose right was superior to that of either of the claimants, the Countess of Warwick; she had brought all the rich possessions of the Beauchamps into her husband's family, as heiress of the great Duke of Warwick, but sharing in Richard Nevill's attainder, her claim was formally set aside.

After frequent deliberations a certain portion of the king-maker's property was awarded to his youngest daughter, Lady Anne, whilst the elder, Isabella, succeeded to all the rest: the decision was ratified by parliament, but however just and equitable, it was far from being satisfactory to the haughty disputants, and a secret hatred grew up in the hearts of men, who though outwardly professing friendship, could never forgive the disappointment of their expectations of personal aggrandizement. A similar circumstance broke the fraternal bond be-

CHAP. V. tween John of Ghent and Thomas of Woodstock, and as in the present instance, affection grew so cold that the more fortunate of the two beheld with careless indifference, the disgrace and death of his brother.

Relieved for the present from the evils menaced by this unfortunate quarrel, Edward rushed with avidity into all the pleasures devised by a luxurious court. Attached to field sports he invested the chace with new delights, carrying with him into the wildest depths of the forest a splendid retinue of noble beauties, for whose accommodation silken pavilions were erected upon the green sward, and the banquet prepared for the gallant train of hunters, who with their voluptuous monarch after ranging through the dark woods, made blythe with ringing hoof and horn, quitted their hawks and hounds to end their festal day with wine and minstrelsy, a scene of picturesque and joyous revelry beautifully contrasted with the fields of carnage which the weary pen has been so often tasked to describe.*

The queen, not it appears "easily jealous," looked on with an unjaundiced eye at the royal philanderer's seductive amusements. Content with her elevation and anxious to secure the influence of her family, Elizabeth carefully avoided all subjects of dispute with a self-willed and licentious husband, thus displaying the prudence of the politician rather than the affectionate tenderness of an anxious wife.

The dissipation which engrossed a large portion of Edward's time did not render him inattentive to the welfare of the kingdom, either as it regarded its in-

* Comines.

ternal or foreign policy. Anxious for the encouragement and protection of commerce, Edward adjusted all the disputes which had arisen between him and the Hans towns: even in the most insecure and turbulent period of his reign he had studied the interests of society in providing for the security of English merchants: out of fifteen statutes which were passed in his third year, thirteen were directed to this praiseworthy object, and he recurred to the same system the moment he was firmly re-established on his throne. The king also confirmed the truce with Scotland, which had been prolonged from the original term to fifty years, kept up his friendly intercourse with Denmark and Portugal, and entered into new treaties with the Dukes of Bretagne and Burgundy.* Thus strengthened abroad and free from all apprehension from domestic enemies, the eyes of the nation anxiously turned upon France. Edward's brilliant military career inspired a hope that the continental possessions, so gloriously won and so disgracefully lost, might be regained by the fortunate arms of a warrior who had fought his blood-stained way to the English crown; and the monarch though sunk in debasing pleasures did not deem it prudent to disappoint the general expectation. The treasury, never in a very flourishing condition, although lately enriched by extensive grants, was very inadequate to the undertaking; "and the king," says Holinshed,† "because he wanted money, and could not well charge hys comons with a newe subsidie, for that he had received the laste yeare great sums of money granted to him by parliament,

CHAP. V.

* Rymer's Fœd.

† Vol. ii. p. 1346.

CHAP. V. he devised this shift, to call before him a great number of the wealthiest sort of people in his realme, and to them declared his neede, and the requisite causes thereof, he demanded of every of them some portion of money, which they sticked not to give, and therefore the king willing to shew them this their liberality was very acceptable to him, he called this grant of money 'a benevolence,' notwithstanding that many with grudge gave great summes toward that new found ayde, which of them might be called a malevolence, but the king used suche gentle fashions toward them, with friendly prayer of their assistance in his necessitie, that they could not otherwyse doe but frankly and freely yeilde and give him a reasonable and competent summe."

Edward's conciliating manners carried a measure which might have been dangerous to the popularity of a less gracious monarch; his extraordinary beauty, which on his accession had called forth a compliment from the Speaker of the House of Commons,* likewise interested many of his subjects in his favour. An amusing anecdote is preserved by Hall, which gives a lively illustration of the person and demeanour of a prince, whose graceful fascinations masked a cold, a callous, and a relentless heart. Summoning a rich widow before him, the king asked her what sum she would willingly give in support of his great expenses. The woman, a portly dame well stricken in years, gazing on the handsome monarch with undisguised pleasure, exclaimed, 'By my troth for thy lovely countenance

* "The beaute of personage that it hath pleased Almighty God to send you."—*Parliament Rolls*, vol. v.

thou shalt even have twenty pounds.' The royal applicant charmed with this honest effusion of sentiment, and the equally unlooked-for gift which accompanied it, thanked the bounteous donor with a kiss: and overjoyed by her sovereign's unexpected courtesy, the good woman instantly doubled the amount of her contribution. CHAP. V.

The historian of Croyland in relating the wonderful success of this expedient, observes that "By this means greater sums of money were collected than had ever been seen before, or will ever be seen hereafter." This monk, adds Dr. Henry, did not possess the gift of prophecy.

The Duke of Burgundy had engaged to co-operate with England in the war. Bretagne was at open enmity with Louis; and the Earl of St. Paul, Constable of France, earnestly invited the approach of an invading army, promising to second it with other great lords against a king who had lost the hearts of his nobility.

The assistance afforded by the French court to the Lancastrian party had excited Edward's vindictive ire. No other foreign enterprize could have roused the voluptuous monarch from a life of slothful ease; but though indifferent to glory he exulted in the prospect of success which opened on an enterprize wherein conquest would be united with revenge.

The preparations of Edward were exceedingly superb, occupying upwards of a year in their completion. Fifteen hundred nobles and gentlemen, the flower of the English chivalry, on horseback, richly trapped and armed after the splendid manner of the

* Hall.

CHAP. V.

time, each having several followers, also equipped with horses, attended upon the king.* There were likewise fifteen thousand mounted archers, a strong body of infantry and a train of artillery, and in the whole array there was not a single page or other useless person.† The Duke of Burgundy sent five hundred flat-bottomed boats from Holland to expedite the passage of the troops; yet, notwithstanding this supply of convenient craft, in addition to their own vessels, they were three weeks in getting across the sea to Calais; and had Louis possessed an efficient navy he might have prevented or at least delayed the invasion.

1475. June 20.

Previous to his embarkation, which took place at Sandwich, Edward dispatched a herald, according to the custom of the age, with a defiance to the French king, demanding the immediate surrender of the crown as the English monarch's rightful inheritance. Louis, aware of the difficulties of his situation, and always choosing to negociate rather than to fight, dissembled his fears and his indignation; and having read the letter without communicating its contents to the circle who stood anxiously watching his countenance,† sent for the bearer into his private closet, and artfully questioning him respecting the disposition of the king, his master, and his feelings towards the war, made him a present of "thirty ells of goodly crimson velvet," three hundred crowns, and the promise of a thousand more if the peace which he so earnestly desired should be concluded, condescending at the same time to explain the various causes which would prevent the

* Comines. † Comines.

Duke of Burgundy and the constable from fulfilling their engagements.* Garter king at arms, pleased with his reception, and eager to secure the remainder of the gold, advised the king to remain quiescent until the hostile array had crossed the sea, and then to send a herald into the English camp to solicit safe conduct for a solemn embassy who should be the bearer of letters to the Lords Howard and Stanley, men high in favour with Edward, and disposed to consult their own interests even against national honour. CHAP. V.

The headstrong obstinacy of the Duke of Burgundy, and the constable's deep dissimulation, paved the way for a treaty which preserved France from a ruinous war. Edward upon landing was surprised and disappointed by the conduct of his expected allies. The Burgundian had involved himself in a rash quarrel with his German neighbours. Wasting both men and treasure before a paltry fortress, which he was at last compelled to relinquish with disgrace, he was not in a condition to perform the promises which had been guaranteed by successive treaties. Charles hastened to meet the King of England with a slender retinue, offered a few weak excuses for the absence of his army, and inviting the monarch to accompany him to Peronne, from some unaccountable suspicion closed the gates of the town, and obliged his friend to encamp in the open fields without the walls. Edward was offended by this symptom of distrust, and another extraordinary circumstance completed his displeasure. The duke assured the king that the constable was ready to

* Comines.

CHAP. V. deliver up the strong town of St. Quentin into his hands; and the English pleased with the prospect of such excellent quarters, marched forward, expecting, as Comines tells us, "that the bells should be rung upon their entrance, and that they should be received by the citizens with the cross and holy water;" but the treacherous commander, intent upon some new and crooked scheme of policy, shut the gates, and commanded the garrison to fire upon the advancing troops: a few of the English were killed, and some taken prisoners. Enraged by the hostility of their pretended ally, the soldiers sullenly retired through inclement weather to a camp which they would have gladly exchanged for the more comfortable shelter of walled houses; and the Duke of Burgundy, extremely disconcerted, took his leave abruptly, with vain assurances that he would speedily return at the head of new levies. A few minutes previous to the departure of the Burgundian, a servant belonging to a gentleman of the French king's household, was captured by the English and brought into the royal tent. This man being the first prisoner taken in the war, Edward, with his usual courtesy, commanded his liberation. Upon leaving the tent, the Lords Howard and Stanley called the Frenchman aside, and informed, perhaps by the herald, of the liberal intentions of Louis to those who might be inclined to enter his service, desired him to present their humble commendations to the king, his master, if it should be in his power to obtain an audience.*

Louis was at this period, at Compeigne, whither

* Comines.

the servant thus curiously exalted into an ambas- CHAP. V.
sador instantly hastened. The jealous monarch suspecting treachery, ordered the bearer of this important message to be thrown into chains for a spy, but sending different persons to question him, was at last convinced of the truth of his intelligence, and hearing the story from his own lips, directed that his fetters should be knocked off though he still detained him in durance. Pleased with this confirmation of the friendly sentiments entertained by Edward's favourite ministers, Louis determined to send letters to these noblemen, and at a period in which all contemporary princes studiously surrounded themselves with the pomp and insignia of royalty, it is a circumstance worthy of record that the French king had not a single herald or even a trumpeter in his retinue. Never at a loss if an object could be gained by chicanery, the intriguing monarch sent to ask a servant of the Lord Halles if he would venture to assume the style and dress of an officer at arms: the risque was great in those days of ceremonious etiquette, the impostor being in danger of a disgraceful death for his usurpation of a character held sacred by the laws of chivalry. After some hesitation the man consented to undertake the part, and a coat being hastily manufactured out of a trumpet banner, and an escutcheon borrowed of a noble, the counterfeit herald repaired to the English camp, and was brought straight to the pavilion of the king. The Lords Howard and Stanley learning the ambassador's errand, gave him words of encouragement, and soon afterwards, admitted by Edward to an audience, he spoke so well on the part of his master, that the

CHAP. V. English council consented to enter into a negociation with Louis, granted him a safe conduct and honourable escort back to the French court, and presented him with four gold nobles, or according to Hall, with a gilt cup and twenty angels. The next morning the commissioners appointed by each party met at a village near Amiens to discuss the preliminaries of peace. Louis sending the bastard of Bourbon, Admiral of France, the Lord Saint Pierre, and a bishop; and Edward the Lord Howard, Sir Thomas St. Leger, and Doctor Morton, a distinguished ecclesiastic destined to act a very conspicuous part in after years, and one of the few Lancastrians whom the English monarch had received into favour. In the service of Queen Margaret, Morton like Sir John Fortescue, had remained faithful to the last extremity in defence of the red rose; but when root and branch was exterminated, accepted, or perhaps sued for pardon to the House of York. Edward, sufficiently discerning to value the priest's estimable character and extraordinary talents, admitted him to the highest degree of confidence; and grateful for the repeated marks of affection which he had received, he espoused the cause of his patron's helpless children with noble fidelity. "The English," says Comines, "after their wonted manner, first demanded the crown of France, at the least Normandy and Guienne," concessions which of course the ambassadors of Louis refused; but both parties being anxious for peace, more reasonable terms were proposed, and Edward's ministers immediately agreed to relinquish all the splendid pretensions of their master, upon the payment of a large sum of money,

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and the promise of an annual pension to the crown: CHAP. V.
they likewise stipulated for the marriage of the Dauphin with the Princess Elizabeth of England, conditions which were very readily accepted.

The French nobles could scarcely credit the report of the commissioners when informed of the unwarlike temper of the invading army; they believed the treaty to be a mere pretence designed for the purpose of lulling them into a fancied security;* but Louis was better acquainted with the circumstances which led to the determination of his late enemy. The evasive conduct of the constable with whom he had successfully tampered, the apparent defection of Burgundy, and the dreary prospect of spending the approaching winter in the discomfort of a camp, he felt assured would disgust Edward with the expedition. The political system pursued by a monarch unparalleled in craft, is so well described in the following account from the pen of Philip De Comines, that any attempt to alter or abridge it would deprive the reader of a very entertaining narrative. He says: "The constable, who began to smell these practices, was stricken with sudden feare because he had offended all the three Princes. Wherefore he sent often to the king, and even at this present arrived at the court one of his gentlemen named Louis of Creville, with one of his secretaries called John Richer, who are both yet living. They delivered their message to the Lord Bouchage and me before they spake with the king, as his pleasure was they should. The news they brought liked the king well, because he meant to use them to good purpose, as

* Comines.

CHAP. V. you shall heare. The Lord of Contay (servant to the Duke of Burgundy) lately taken prisoner before Arras, went to-and-fro upon his word between the duke and the king: and the king had promised to release him his ransom, and to give him a great summe of money if he could persuade his master to peace. By chance he returned to the king the selfe same day that these two servants of the Constable's arrived. Wherefore the king made him and me to stand in a great old presse in his chamber, to the end he might heare and make report to his master of the language the constable and his servants used of him. We being there placed, the king sate downe on a forme hard by the presse, to the end we might the better heare Louis of Creville and his companion's message, who began thus: 'that of late being by their master's commandement with the Duke of Burgundy, to persuade him to depart from the Englishmen's friendship, they found him in such a rage against the King of England, that they had almost won him not onley to abandon the Englishmen but also to helpe to spoile and destroy them in their return home. And in uttering these words (the better to please the king) the said Louis of Creville counterfeiting the Duke of Burgundy's gesture by stamping upon the ground and sweating St. George, rehearsed many reprochful speeches that (as they said) the duke used of the King of England. To be short they uttered as many scofs and mocks of the duke as was possible. The king made great sport of this matter, and bad the said Louis of Creville to speake alowd, faining himself to be growen somewhat deafe, and to tell him this tale againe, which the

other making no bones thereat, did it with a good will. CHAP. V.

"The said Contay, who stood with me in the presse, was marvellously astonished at this talke, neither would have believed it unless himself had heard it. When the others had departed, the Lord of Contay and I came out of the presse; the king laughed marvellously, and was very merry with this pageant. But the said Contay was so far out of patience to heare such petit companions thus flout and scoffe his master, especially the constable pretending so great friendship to his master, and treating with him of so many matters, that he thought every hower ten till he were on horsebacke to advertise the Duke his master thereof." By these and similar arts Louis contrived to break asunder the most powerful confederations of his enemies.

Burgundy, upon hearing a rumour of the projected peace, hastened to the King of England to ascertain the truth of the intelligence; he came attended only by sixteen horse, and although he had suffered himself to be drawn away from the enterprize by an insane quarrel with the Emperor of Germany, he upbraided Edward with the noble actions performed by his predecessors in France, and refusing to be comprehended in the nine years' truce to which his ally had agreed, rode away in great displeasure leaving the king and his council equally incensed. The duke's indignant speech was highly applauded by those amid the nobles who desired to uphold their country's honour, and viewed with shame and regret the base price for which Edward and his favourites had bartered England's ancient

CHAP. V. possessions; but the sovereign and the ministers were dazzled by the golden shower which poured itself into their laps; and no remonstrance however just and spirited could deter them from accepting the splendid bribe. The constable, dreadfully alarmed by the measures which his own treachery had produced, sent his confessor to Edward, desiring for "God love," that he would not trust to the King of France's promises, or consent to a dishonourable peace for the sake of a paltry grant; assuring him that he would put him into immediate possession of the towns of Eu and Valence and lend him fifty thousand crowns, if he stood in need of money: but the king, aware that he only desired time to make advantageous terms for himself, answered that the truce was already concluded.* 110

Louis, with the most minute attention to every circumstance which promised to favour his designs, studied to reconcile Edward's soldiers to the change in their prospects. The English camp had been removed to the close vicinity of Amiens, for the purpose of a more ready communication with the French government, and the gates of the town were opened freely to the troops. The licentious and disorderly state of the army rendered this privilege exceedingly dangerous: immense numbers, contrary to the custom usually observed upon such occasions, entered the town in arms, and their hostile appearance, combined with their want of common precaution, might have been very fatal in case of any treachery on the part of Louis, who

* Comines.

had the destruction of considerable bodies daily in his power. CHAP. V.

The French monarch fortunately honestly desired to make peace, and provided so handsomely for the entertainment of Edward's soldiers, that they had little reason to regret the loss of their expected conquests. Long tables covered with dainty provisions were laid out in the streets, abundance of wine flowed in every direction. "Of water," says Comines, "there was no mention." The citizens were appointed to wait upon their rude guests, and moreover the taverns were furnished at the expence of Louis, and whatever house they entered they paid nothing.

Such a reception delighted the Englishmen; at one time there were not less than nine thousand soldiers in the town, and even the king, notwithstanding his determined indulgence to all their wishes, became alarmed lest they should take up arms and possess themselves of his person: but his fears were calmed by the report of Philip de Comines, who, inspecting the city, found the strangers for the most part either drunk or asleep, or abandoned to reckless jollity, and all in situations very incompatible with any preconcerted design. Edward ashamed at length of the excesses of his troops, desired that they might be denied entrance, which Louis politicly refusing, he took the town gates into his possession, a few only were admitted, and their revels were carried on with greater regard to decency and decorum: thus the King of France got rid of his troublesome visitors without the odium of ordering their expulsion.

CHAP. V. Both parties displayed more distrust in the interview which took place between the two monarchs; the spot appointed for the meeting was the centre of a wooden bridge, constructed for the purpose across the river; where they conversed with each other through a grating. The two armies were drawn up on the morning of this important ceremonial on different sides of the stream; that of England made a gallant show, being marshalled in order of battle, whilst Louis who disregarded all outward pomp, was only attended by eight hundred men-at-arms. The French king came first to the grate with twelve nobles in his train, and immediately after he had taken his station Edward advanced up the causeway at the head of his court; he was splendidly attired in cloth of gold, and wore the fleur-de-lys formed of rich jewels in his black velvet cap. Philip de Comines, who was present, having quitted the service of the Duke of Burgundy for that of the King of France, remarks that though still handsome increasing corpulence had somewhat deteriorated the beauty formerly so strikingly conspicuous in his person.* The Duke of Clarence, the Lord Hastings, the Earl of Northumberland, the Chancellor, and many other nobles superbly habited, accompanied the king, but Gloucester whose martial spirit panted for war, refused to sanction these inglorious negociations with his presence. Many formal salutations and various studied compliments passed between the courteous sovereigns. Edward replying

* I had seen him before much beautifuller than at the present; for sure when the Earl of Warwick chased him out of England, he was the goodliest gentleman that ever I set mine eye on.—*Philip de Comines.*

to those addressed to him in excellent French, an accomplishment not general we may suppose from the observation of Comines, and the treaty being read, both kings swore upon a cross and missal, to observe the articles mutually agreed by their respective councils. The solemnity ended, more lively conversation ensued. Louis in his anxiety to say pleasant things, unwarily asked the English monarch to visit him in Paris, giving as a motive the charms of the ladies, and jocosely assuring him that he should have the Cardinal of Bourbon for his confessor. Edward laughed, and pleased with the jovial turn which the meeting had taken, answered with his wonted frankness. Louis eager to profit by his companion's thoughtless humour, asked what course should be pursued towards the Dukes of Burgundy and Bretagne, a question of deep import to his designs upon the territory of the latter prince. The King of England replied that he would make a second offer to Burgundy to include him in the truce, which if he refused he would interfere no farther; but earnestly desired that nothing should be attempted against the Duke of Bretagne, since "in his necessity he had never found so faithful a friend." Louis promised to comply with this injunction, and taking leave with many gracious words, noticed every one of Edward's retinue with a condescending speech, a method of ingratiating himself with his inferiors which he well knew to be effectual. CHAP. V.

The King of England retired to his camp, and Louis to Amiens, whence he dispatched a sumptuous present of provisions and other articles necessary for

CHAP. V. Edward's accommodation, the obsequious purveyor not even omitting torches and tapers. He had already furnished the royal table with three hundred cart loads of wine, and now determined upon subduing the opposition of those whom his keen eye missed at the meeting, so pressingly invited the Duke of Gloucester to visit him at Amiens, that the prince, unable to resist, complied with the flattering request, and accepted silver, plate, horses, and furniture from the judicious monarch's hands. Louis, when surrounded by his own trusted friends, indulged his scorn of the sordid enemy, so easily won by the touch of Mammon; neither did he escape censure from those who despised the base means to which he had descended in the preservation of his ancestorial rights, worthy of more honourable defence by the sword.* The treaty thus bought and sold was equally disgraceful to both parties; but the anxiety to soothe the weaknesses of crowned heads, so prevalent in courts, produced a rumour to which superstition readily gave credence. The friends of the peace averred that it had been made by the Holy Spirit, "for that a white pigeon sate upon the King of England's pavilion during his interview with Louis, and would not remove thence, notwithstanding any noise made in the camp." Others, more enlightened, or less rapacious, treated the tale with contempt. One of Edward's servants, a Gascon by birth, even ventured to express his honest indignation at the king's dastardly surrender of those hopes of conquest which opened so brightly before him. Philip de Comines asked him, "How many battles the

* Comines.

English monarch had won?" He replied. "Nine." CHAP. V.
And to the question, "How many he had lost?" he answered gallantly, "But one, that of which you have bereaved him;" adding, that he sustained greater dishonour in returning home without an attempt to wreathe his brow with laurels, than he had received glory in all his former victories. Louis, informed of these generous sentiments, earnestly sought to win the speaker to his interests by the all powerful influence of flattery and gold. He was afraid that Edward's debased soul might be awakened to more lofty thoughts by the remonstrances of those around him; and in accordance with his usual method, he lavished costly favours upon the intrepid Gascon, invited him to his own table, and though he refused to quit the King of England's service for the promise of an excellent office in France, forced a present of a thousand crowns upon him, saying privately to his confidents, that he was a dangerous knave and his mouth must be stopped. Having succeeded in corrupting the king, the nobles, and the army, Louis had two objects still to gain: the immediate departure of the English and the consent of Edward to his unwarrantable projects against the Duke of Bretagne. He expedited the former by the prompt payment of the money stipulated in the late treaty; but in the latter, notwithstanding his splendid bribe, he met a grievous disappointment. Undeterred by the King of England's evident reluctance to abandon his friend, Louis dispatched two lords to his court, with instructions to employ all their influence in the accomplishment of this favourite point. The

CHAP. V. merchant of Gascoine that dwelt in England, who mission failed: a dearer interest interposed, or perhaps a faint spark of virtue still existed in Edward's contaminated heart, and flaming forth at the call of honour, he replied with generous energy, "That whosoever should make war upon the Duke of Bretagne, he would cross the sea again in his defence." This spirited effusion effectually silenced the intriguing king.*

The obsequious meanness of the Lord Howard brought Louis into an awkward dilemma. This noble, anxious to evince the excess of his dearly-purchased zeal, and imagining in his simplicity that the King of France sincerely desired to cultivate a personal intercourse with Edward, offered to bring his master to Amiens, or even to Paris, to visit him. Louis with some difficulty parried the attack without betraying his secret repugnance. Alarmed by the frank acceptance of his invitation, he had already expressed his fears of the consequences which might probably result from the protracted residence of the English monarch in France to Philip de Comines, who has preserved the wary politician's speech: "For he is, quoth he, a goodly prince, and much given to love, he may peradventure meete with some daintie dame at Paris, that will entertaine him with so many sugred words, that she may happily make him desirous to return thither againe; but his predecessors have sojourned too long

* Andrews remarks, that "if Edward's own private interests had not been concerned, he would have abandoned Bretagne to the King of France, or the Prince of Darkness, for an additional present of fifty thousand crowns.—*General Chronology.*

both in Paris and Normandy. I like not his com- CHAP. V.
pany on this side of the sea; but so long as he keepeth home I wish to have him my good friend and loving brother."

Edward left Lord Howard and another gentleman as hostages for the performance of his engagements, and then prepared to re-embark, enriched with the treasures of Louis, and the money lavished by his own subjects upon the delusive but flattering prospect of recovering the crown of France. Though Louis did not scruple to express his contempt of the enemies whom he had so easily cajoled by flattering their vanity, pampering their appetites, and administering to their avarice, he was kept in a continual state of apprehension from the dread of revealing his private sentiments to those who might convey the bitter gibes extorted by the sordid rapacity and weak credulity of the invaders to English ears. Comines relates an anecdote which proves how anxiously he endeavoured to prevent the mischief which threatened to arise from those imprudent sallies which, notwithstanding his habitual wariness, he could not always repress. "The king," says the writer, to whose entertaining pen posterity is so deeply indebted, "feared especially above all things least some word should escape him at unawares, whereby the Englishmen might gather that he derided them. And by chance the next morning after this meeting, as he was in his closet, and not past three or fower of us with him, he spake a merrie word touching the wines and presents sent to the English campe; and as he turned about, observed a

CHAP. V. was come to moove a suit to him for a license to ship certain Gascoine wines into England without impost, which was a sute that might much benefit the said merchant if he could obtain it. The king woondered when he saw him how he was gotten in thither, and asked him of what towne he was in Guienne, and whether he were a merchant and maried in England? The merchant answered yea, but that his wealth was not great. Incontinent before his departure thence the king appointed one to accompanie him to Bordeaux, and I communed with him at his commaudement. Further, a good office in the towne where he was borne was given him; the license for the wines which he demanded was granted him; and besides this, one thousand franks were delivered him for his wive's charges upon the way, and he sent a brother of his into England for hir, but went not himselfe: thus the king imposed this penaltie upon himselfe for his over large speech."

Somewhat uneasy respecting the nature of his reception in England, Edward contrived to divert the attention of the people from the late disgraceful transaction by the splendour of a civic pageant; ten or twelve of the wealthiest commoners of London and other great cities had accompanied the king in his enterprize, and heartily tired of the unaccustomed hardships of a military life, not only consented to the treaty, but lent their aid to appease their brethren in England, and reconcile them to the failure of their high expectations.* Edward was therefore secure of the trading community. The mayor and aldermen attended by five hundred citi-

* Comines.

zens met the royal train at Blackheath, and ushered them into London amidst shouts and acclamations. The public voice is easily gained by an appeal to the senses, but when the glittering procession had passed away, the people began to reflect upon the shameful circumstances which had destroyed their eager hopes, and this discontent inflamed by the indignant speeches of many martial individuals disappointed of the soldier's most honourable reward, broke out into open murmurs. The ignominious expedition which awoke these bitter feelings was the scorn of civilized Europe, and nearly effaced all the glory formerly gained by the proud islanders in their exploits on the continent: even the English hostages, shamed into a more manly spirit by the taunts of foreigners, regretted their abject debasement to sordid gain, and almost meditated a new invasion to wipe off the stigma attached to the last. CHAP. V.

Lord Howard and his colleague, to excuse their acquiescence in a disgraceful peace, observed to Philip de Comines, that if they had been acquainted with the strength of the Duke of Burgundy, whose ambassador came to the French court, "well accompanied by archers and men of war," they, peradventure, would not have consented to the truce; "which words," says Comines, "the Vicount of Narbonne hearing said, 'Were you so simple to think that the Duke of Burgundy had not great force of such men? he had sent them only to refresh themselves:* but you were so desirous to return home, that six hundred pipes of wine, and a pension the king giveth you, blewe you quickly back

* Comines.

CHAP. V. to England.' The Englishmen in a great furie answered: 'I perceive now their sayings to prove true, that told us you would deride us for making peace. Call you the money the king giveth us a pension? It is tribute; and by St. George you may babble so much that you may soon make us to return.' But I," continues the judicious minister, "brake off the talke, and turned it to a jest; notwithstanding, the Englishman was discontented, and cast out a word thereof to the king, who was marvellously offended with the Lord of Narbonne for his speech."

Edward, secure upon his throne, disregarded the indications of popular feeling which reached his ears; not one of his nobles had possessed sufficient virtue to reject the tempting offers of Louis; nay, they were to a man retained in his pay, and the disaffected portion of the nation destitute of a leader to incite them to a more dangerous manifestation of their resentment, allowed their angry passions to evaporate
1467 in words. The king by a harsh yet well-timed severity punished the too licentious expressions of his subjects, visited with inflexible justice the outrages of his disbanded soldiery, and giving the sanction of his presence to the provincial circuits, enforced the most rigid decree of the law upon every convicted culprit, whatever might have been his station or his services. Terrified into submission by these vigorous measures, the nation became tranquil, and ceased to animadvert upon the proceedings of the government.

The Duke of Bretagne, overpowered by the weight of his obligations to Edward, nearly sacrificed to his

gratitude the exiles whom he had generously refused to deliver up in his necessities. The King of England, tormented with a prophetic fear of danger to his house from young Richmond, persuaded his too credulous ally that he was actuated by the most friendly and honourable motives in his desire to obtain possession of the earl, being anxious to secure his affection and to attach him to his interests by giving him one of his daughters in marriage. The duke deceived by these assurances resigned his prisoners into the hands of the ambassadors appointed by Edward to receive them;* but Cheulet, one of his council, suspecting the monarch's sincerity,† represented in strong and animated terms to this honourable prince the indelible stain which would darken his memory, if the nobles, to whom in their adversity he had granted shelter and protection, should by his connivance be involved in death and ruin; and touched by the generous eloquence of his faithful adviser, he dispatched Peter Landois, a favourite servant, to prevent their departure from his dominions. The delay of an hour would have changed the destinies of Henry Tudor, upon the point of embarking at St. Maloes to meet a doubtful fate; his voyage was arrested by the joyful interposition of the duke's faithful servant; a stratagem was necessary to recover him from the grasp of Edward: the embassadors were secure of their prize, and Landois engaged them in conversation whilst Pembroke and Richmond, apprised of the duke's change of measures, hastened into sanctuary, and remained protected by the inviolable privileges of

CHAP. V.

* Comines. † Hall.

CHAP. V. their asylum until the return of Edward's messengers to England. Francis handsomely excused his non-compliance with the king's wishes, and assured him that he might banish all apprehension of injury from his prisoners, whom he would guard too effectually for the chance of their accomplishing the slightest evil against his crown and government; and Edward, either really innocent of those sanguinary intentions imputed to him, or fearful of betraying a criminal design upon these unhappy fugitives, abstained from any farther attempt to obtain the custody of their persons.

The importance of the heir of the illegitimate house of Somerset, a young man scarcely possessing the shadow of a right to the English throne, destitute of family connections, all his relations, with the exception of his mother and his exiled uncle, having been swept away in the civil wars, an alien without property, patronage, or influence, affords a strong proof of the inveterate prejudices of the Lancastrians; and the determined yet apparently hopeless obstinacy with which they clung to the withering branches of the red rose; yet Edward with short-sighted policy listened to the unkind suggestions of the enemies of Clarence, and suffering his long slumbering anger to be rekindled, in pursuing the dictates of revenge, destroyed one of the bulwarks of his throne.

CHAPTER VI.

Struggles in the Cabinet—Edward's Indolence—Discontent of Clarence—he aspires to the Hand of the Princess of Burgundy—Disappointment of his Hopes—Enmity of the Queen—Impolicy of Clarence—Misconstruction of Burdett's hasty Speech—Persecution of the Duke's Servants—Arrest of Clarence—his Trial before the Peers—The King's Speech in Parliament—Condemnation of Clarence—his friendless Situation—his mysterious Death—Edward's bitter Repentance—Misfortunes of the Heirs of Clarence—Grants to Lord Rivers—Edward devotes himself to Pleasure—he enriches himself by Trade—Base Conduct of the French King—Edward projects Alliances for his Children—Marriage of the Infant Duke of York with a Baby Wife—Stately Hunt at Waltham—Present to the Citizens' Wives—Treachery of Louis XI.—Lord Howard's Mission to Paris—Rupture with Scotland—Intemperate Language of Edward and James—Rebellious Spirit of the Scottish Nobles—Execution of the Earl of Mar—Albany's Visit at the English Court—his Proposals to Edward—Siege of Berwick—Destruction of the Favourites of James—Albany and Gloucester advance to Edinburgh—Reconciliation of Albany and his Brother—Edward's Discontent at the Expences of the War—Breach between France and England—Edward's Illness—his ineffectual Attempt to reconcile the Nobles—he repents of his Extortion—Death of the King—Edward's Disposition and Character—Reports in France respecting the Cause of his Death.

WHILST profound tranquillity reigned abroad, and a deceitful calm lulled Edward into fatal security at home, the English council-chamber was filled with intrigue and cabal. A formidable party opposed

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themselves to the queen's relations; and though the struggles of the rival factions for power were no longer as heretofore backed by hosts of armed retainers, they entailed the same deadly consequences on the realm, sacrificed the life of Clarence, and paved the way to new scenes of blood and carnage. The brothers of Elizabeth Gray though amiable were ambitious; they saw themselves held in scorn by a haughty nobility, and they sought to gain supremacy over contemptuous superiors in birth, by new acquisitions, which in increasing honours and riches already considered above their desert, added fresh incitements to the jealousy of their enemies.

The king plunged into a career of vicious extravagance, surrounded by courtezans, and studying only how to feed his intemperance by enriching the crown revenues without the risque of alienating his subjects' hearts by the imposition of heavy taxes, was too much engaged in these pleasures and cares to direct his attention to the most effectual means of counteracting the evils threatened by the dangerous strife of his nobles: and content with soothing them into temporary pacification, sought only to engage the rival parties in the gay revels of a profligate court. Smiles played upon the features of those who sate round the monarch's festal board, but envy, hatred, and jealousy rankled with festering anguish in their hearts.

Edward's schemes of finance had given umbrage to his brother, the acts passed by parliament for the resumption of royal grants, though frequent, had seldom been productive in consequence of the danger of depriving potent nobles of their wealth;

but the king was now more desirous of conciliating the commons than fearful of offending the higher classes; he was aware that the popularity of his government depended upon the relief of the nation from those burthens which former sovereigns had imposed, and he turned his attention to less grievous means of filling the treasury and providing for the expenditure of a splendid household; the duties on the customs were levied with unwonted strictness, he enforced the payment of the tenths from the clergy, obliged the superior orders of ecclesiastics to compound for the restoration of their temporalities with large sums, and took into his own hands those estates belonging to the crown which the parliament had enabled him to resume.* In pursuing the last measure the king made no exception in favour of the Duke of Clarence; and the proud covetous temper of that prince could not brook the loss of any portion of the immense wealth which he had amassed with little regard to the interests of others or to his own reputation. He betrayed his displeasure by a sullen humour which refused to yield to the most conciliating attentions, could seldom be persuaded to appear at court, avoided the festal banquets of the king, or refused to sit at the same board; and when he condescended to attend the council, kept aloof from his companions and displayed his indifference or dislike to their proceedings by an inflexible silence. This conduct offended the king, more especially as the eyes of the nation were turned upon Clarence with affectionate reverence. Sharing in the popularity of Warwick, after the death of the

* History of Croyl.

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earl, he became the idol of the common people, and their undisguised partiality was in itself sufficient to excite Edward's jealousy, since he could not forget the idea once contemplated of the transfer of the crown from his own brows to those of his brother; no subsequent services could obliterate this bitter remembrance, and the defection of Clarence from the Nevills might be imputed rather to the defeat of his own hopes in the ambitious earl's preference of the claim of Edward of Lancaster, than to any unbiassed impulse of a repentant heart in favour of an injured brother.

Clarence had become a widower; the loss of his wife was attended by mysterious circumstances; she fell into a state of debility after the birth of her third child, and languishing for the space of two months died, not without strong suspicion of being prematurely hastened to her grave by poison. Ankaret Twynhyo* one of her female attendants, was charged with the deed, found guilty at a public trial
1476. and suffered the sentence of the law. About the same period the Duke of Burgundy finished his rash career before Nanci, and his sole heiress the Princess Mary became the object of attraction to a crowd of potentates and nobles eagerly aspiring to her hand. The Duchess of Burgundy her step-mother pleaded not unavailingly in favour of the Duke of Clarence; he was Margaret's favourite brother, and she was anxious to secure for him the noble orphan's rich domains. A base sentiment upon the part of Edward prevented a marriage which would have been highly advantageous to England; his mean cove-

* Parliament Rolls.

sions to Louis XI. had enabled that worldly-minded monarch to aggrandize his kingdom by the spoil of its most potent vassal; casting his rapacious eyes over the fair duchy, both fraud and force were employed in its subjection; and immediately upon the demise of his dreaded enemy he seized upon the frontier towns, and by the machiavelian policy which he so well knew how to practice involved the luckless Mary's subjects in domestic dissensions, while he committed the most daring ravages upon places left defenceless and open to his grasp.* The union of Normandy and Guienne to the crown had given gigantic power to France, and it was the interest of England to prevent new acquisitions of territory to a neighbour so ambitious and so formidable; but Edward, smitten with a life of slothful ease, fettered by the golden chains which Louis had cast around him, and unwilling to embroil himself in a hazardous war for the elevation of a man whom he feared would turn the wealth and resources of Burgundy against the English crown, resolutely and successfully opposed the suit of Clarence.

The duke's mortification and resentment at this repulse was deepened by another circumstance. The queen was his enemy.† He had never deigned to conceal his unmitigated scorn of her family, and endeavoured upon all occasions to make them feel their inferiority. These provocations inspired a narrow-minded woman with the desire of revenge. She cherished dark recollections of his enmity to her children, and his nearly triumphant attempt to supplant them. Her brother was also a widower, and

* Comines. † Hall.

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at liberty to espouse the Princess Mary, and entertaining similar views for his exaltation, she enjoyed a malicious pleasure in counteracting the designs of Clarence. The duke, with ill-suppressed rage, saw overtures made in behalf of a man whom he hated as an upstart, while his own hopes were irrevocably destroyed. The accomplished and amiable Rivers was rejected with disdain by the proud council of the heiress, but this result could not appease the anger of an enraged and insulted rival.

The imprudent murmurs of this unhappy prince gave a powerful advantage to his enemies. His indignant complaints were reported probably with exaggeration to the king; and a ridiculous prophecy, which however made a strong impression upon the ignorant and credulous, was interpreted against him. We are informed upon the authority of some of the old chronicles,* that the usurpation of the throne, to the prejudice of Edward's children, had been foretold of a person whose name should begin with a G. This suited either George of Clarence or Richard of Gloucester; but was fastened by the malevolence and the jealousy of designing persons on the former, and a few foolish words, purposely misconstrued, involved one of his friends in ruin, and paved the way for his own destruction. During a temporary absence from England, the duke's adversaries commenced their attack by the persecution of his dependants. The late aggressions which he had sustained were naturally the common topics of conversation amongst his followers; and the too-zealous expression of their opinions did not pass unnoticed

* Holinshed.

or unpunished. An accident, trifling in itself, but attended with disastrous consequences, gave the king a pretext for the indulgence of his ferocious cruelty. Edward, in hunting, had killed a white buck belonging to Thomas Burdett, an esquire of Clarence, and the faithful companion of every change in his fortune. Angry at the perhaps wanton slaughter of his favourite, he imprudently said that he wished the head and horns of the animal in the body of him who had advised the king to destroy it. This hasty speech was reported, but with a different meaning: the monarch himself being represented as the object of Burdett's evil wish. In these days it was indeed treason to imagine the king's death, and Clarence's unfortunate squire suffered the penalty. The royal displeasure had been previously directed against a priest named Stacie, another of the duke's dependants, a man of some learning, and remarkable for his skill in mathematics, a science incomprehensible to the vulgar and obnoxious to the jealousy of superstitious ignorance in that dark and credulous age. The devoted ecclesiastic was accused of sorcery, and stretched in agony upon the rack tortured into the confession of his guilt. Pressed by insidious questions he admitted that Burdett had been his accomplice. Both the alleged culprits were immediately hurried to trial, and in the short space of two days condemned and executed. They protested their innocence of the charge which had been brought against them on the scaffold, and strongly though vainly appealed against the injustice of the sentence. The rage of Clarence was ungovernable when he learned the miserable fate which had over-

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taken his murdered friends. Disregarding every prudent consideration for his own safety, he thought only of the vindication of these slandered men. They had been attended in their last moments by a celebrated divine named Goddard. Impressed with a conviction of their innocence he accompanied the duke to the council chamber at Westminster, and presented copies of the sufferers' private and public declarations to the assembled lords.* Edward, informed of his brother's generous interference, hastened from Windsor to London, summoned the mayor and sheriffs to his presence, and calling the duke before them, loaded him with reproach and accusation. The last act magnified into the commission of treason, and every petty aggression swelled into an unpardonable crime, Clarence having sustained the bitterest invectives from the enraged monarch, was arrested by his order and sent a prisoner to the tower.

The unfortunate duke was now completely at the mercy of his enemies. The queen it is said pursued him with unremitting hatred; the Wydevilles, with whom he was at open variance, probably urged his death as an act of justice for the past, and precaution against future wrongs; and Gloucester, if not adding his voice to the general outcry, was silent and acquiescent in the revengeful schemes of his less crafty foes. Edward's fierce spirit lashed into fury by the malignant representations of those about him, trampled upon every sentiment of humanity and feeling. A scene more appalling than any spectacle which the most barbarous age of England had pro-

* Continuation of Croyl.

duced, was acted in the House of Lords. Clarence appeared as a prisoner at the bar, and the king forgetful of the fraternal tie stood up as the accuser of his brother. *Edward in addressing the assembly enumerated the benefits which he had lavishly bestowed upon an ungrateful kinsman, who he declared in despite of this liberal bounty had conspired with his enemies, driven him into exile, and consented to his deposition. Pardoned for crimes so flagrant and unnatural, the monarch averred that he had again meditated the seizure of the crown, and in pursuance of his new designs employed his servants in exciting the commons to sedition: they were directed to blacken the king's character by impiously charging him with the practice of necromantic arts, and to seduce the people from their allegiance by promulgating a report of his illegitimacy; thereby affirming that he was incapable of reigning according to the constitution of the country. Edward then proceeded to state that the duke had commenced his intended usurpation by procuring unlawful oaths from misguided men, who swore upon the holy sacrament to be true to him and his heirs, without any regard to the fealty so solemnly pledged to their rightful sovereign; that he had retained in his possession a copy of the act of parliament entailing the kingdom, in default of male issue to the House of Lancaster, upon himself and his children; that he had privately commanded his retainers to be in constant readiness to join him in arms, and that he had endeavoured to introduce a stranger into his castle to personate his son, whom he intended

CHAP. VI. 1473.

* Parliament Rolls.

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to send into a foreign country, under the pretence, that his life was endangered by the machinations of the king.* Clarence answered boldly to these allegations, offering to prove his innocence by single combat: the reply has not been preserved, but he is reported to have sustained the charge without
1478. shrinking, and his retorts we are told were keen and acrimonious.† The rank and character of his accuser ensured his doom; if the duke possessed any friends they were mute, and the ominous silence which followed his defence was only interrupted by a declaration against him:
Feb. 7. he was found guilty without a dissentient voice, and the Duke of Buckingham who had been appointed lord high-steward for the occasion, passed the awful judgment of the peers, and sentenced him to death. Buckingham was also directed to superintend the execution, but Edward, still retaining a faint touch of pity in his iron breast, could not send his brother forth to perish on a scaffold. The completion of the tragedy was delayed, and perchance if the king had been left to the suggestions of his own heart, he might have extended mercy to so near a relative, but active spirits were at work, intent upon the ruin of the duke; no gentle tongue pleaded in his favour and implored for pardon; no kind friend palliated his errors, excused his faults, or called to remembrance that eminent service which he had rendered the monarch in deserting the victorious arms of Warwick: his crimes were the theme of conversation, and men dwelt upon his ambition and his perjury: vindictive enemies were loud and urgent in demanding his death, and the commons incited to join the league against him, peti-

* Parliament Rolls. † History of Croyle.

tioned the king to execute justice on his brother.* Edward with late regard to decency was unwilling to amaze the world with the public sacrifice of a prince of the blood: the axe, the block, and the grim headsman were spared, but life was not permitted to the unfortunate object of hatred and jealousy. The duke was privately made away with in the tower, drowned or stifled according to common report in a butt of Malmsey wine, a strange mode of destruction, which has met with little credence in a more enlightened age. A slight attempt was made to conceal the dark transaction which deprived Clarence of his life, in the announcement of his demise. The people were informed that he had died of melancholy; no one, however, at any period, either at the time or subsequently, entertained the least doubt of his murder, although the precise method never transpired.

When the doom of Clarence was irrevocably sealed agonizing remorse sprang up in Edward's breast, continually haunted by recollections of the fatal catastrophe which had dispatched his victim with cruel and untimely haste to the grave, the anguish of his soul burst forth in unavailing lamentations. Frequently sued to remit the sentence of malefactors condemned to condign punishment, he answered the pleaders with bitter exclamations of reproachful grief: "Oh, unfortunate brother, for whose life not one creature would make intercession."†

Clarence left two children, a son and a daughter, to whom his evil fortune was bequeathed; both perished on a scaffold. Dragged to the block by the

* Parliament Rolls. † Hall.

CHAP. VI.

savage order of a relentless tyrant, Henry VIII.; the grey hairs of the latter were dyed in her blood, and in the former, executed in the preceding reign, the proud name of Plantagenet was extinguished. Lord Rivers became the chief gainer by the duke's confiscated estates; they were granted to him as a compensation for the injuries which he had sustained from his slaughtered enemy, and in the hope, it was hypocritically said, that the duke's soul would derive benefit in consequence of this just reparation.* A specious pretext for the plunder of the luckless heirs. The wardship of the children, a lucrative office in these times, was given to the Marquis of Dorset, the queen's son by her first husband, and this division of the spoil to the exclusion of Gloucester, has been adduced as a proof that the duke did not share in the conspiracy against his brother: if not an active performer he was at least a passive spectator in the dismal scene, for it is plain from the repentant king's upbraiding ejaculations, that he made no effort to save him.

Edward endeavoured to escape from the terrors of thought by plunging into a ruinous dissipation, which enervated his mind and rendered him utterly regardless of his own and the national glory. The cares of state were confined to the means of acquiring riches; for this end he even descended to engage in commerce, a mode of amassing wealth which was held in scorn by men who thought open robbery far less beneath the dignity of an exalted station.† The king's ships laden with tin, wool, and cloth, traded in the ports of Italy and Greece,

* Rymer. † History of Croyle.

and these commodities were in his name exposed in the public markets. He grew rich; but becoming more avaricious as his coffers filled, he permitted Louis, for the sake of the gold crowns annually poured into his treasury, to pursue his ambitious plans against the House of Burgundy without interruption; a pensioned ministry sharing in the monarch's disgraceful weakness, and flattering it for the sake of a paltry bribe. Suffered to grovel under the base slavery of his passsions without one awakening remonstrance, in the desperate situation of the daughter of his old and brave ally Edward contented himself with sending an embassy to the French court to mediate a peace. The perfidious king at first soothed his visitors with artful speeches, and soon perceiving how little they were inclined to aid the suffering lady, ventured to propose the union of Edward's arms with those of France in the seizure and division of her territories. The English monarch equally heartless and rapacious approved the project, but could not be prevailed upon to accept Flanders and Brabant, which still remained in her possession, instead of Picardy, already conquered, and advantageously situated in the close vicinity of Calais. Louis would not permit the nation he so much dreaded to recover a foot of land upon his frontier, and Mary of Burgundy, who had vainly clung to the friendship of England for support in her distress, thus threatened on all sides, concluded a hasty marriage with Maximilian, Arch Duke of Austria, which enabled her to retain some part of her rich inheritance.*

Edward flattered with the expectation of uniting

* Comines.

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his eldest daughter to the Dauphin of France, amused himself with making contracts for the rest of his children. He entered into a treaty with Scotland for the marriage of Cecily, his second daughter, with the son and heir of James; negociated with Bretagne for the hand of Anne, afterwards the Queen of Charles VIII., for the Prince of Wales, and caused the nuptials or the betrothment to be celebrated between the young Duke of York and the Lady Anne, heiress of the Duke of Norfolk; the parties were both children, and neither ever reached maturity.

1477. Upon this occasion we are told that a splendid field was held for the martial amusements of the time.* Six gentlemen challenged "all commers at the just roiall, to runne in osting harnies alonge a tilte, and to strike thirteen strokes with swordes, in honour of the marriage of Richard Duke of York with the Lady Anne, daughter of the Duke of Norfolk." Satisfied with these political arrangements of which not one ever took place, the king abandoned himself to feasting and jollity. Forced into the field by his necessities he threw away the sword which had covered him with glory the moment that the last domestic enemy was slain; and foreign potentates who might have been taught to tremble at his power, regarded him as a weak voluptuous prince, only provoked to quit his silken couch by the thunder of war at his palace gates, and the beaten foe crushed beneath his never failing arm, returning to the lap of pleasure again, uninterested in foreign politics, and too indolent to pluck the laurels which offered

* Harleian MSS.

themselves to his grasp. Rioting in the indulgences of the table, Edward's person became bloated and unwieldy through inordinate intemperance; surrounded with minstrelsy, and lapt in luxurious ease, the spirit-stirring trumpet had long been rejected for the soft breathings of the lute, we do not hear of his exploits at the Tourney, and the chase was the only athletic exercise which roused him from a life of effeminate sloth.

Always attentive to the means of ingratiating himself with the Londoners, towards the close of his reign the king invited the principal citizens to hunt with him in the Forest of Waltham;* a feast was spread for them under green bowers, and the courteous monarch refused to sit until he saw his guests served: with his usual gallantry towards the fair sex he admitted them into a participation of the favours conferred upon their male relations, sending to the Lady Mayoress and her sisters, the aldermen's wives, two harts, six bucks, and a tun of wine, with which we are told they made merry in Draper's Hall.*

The last years of Edward's life were embittered by contentions with France and Scotland. He discovered the dissimulation of the former power when too late. Louis anxious at any rate to purchase peace, had beguiled him with a deceitful hope of a marriage between the Dauphin and the Princess Elizabeth of England; but if he ever seriously intended that the marriage should take place, he did not hesitate to break his engagement when a more advantageous alliance offered. All that secret in-

* Fabian.

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trigue and open hostility could effect had been long employed in the subjugation of Burgundy; the union of Mary with the imperial family, had alone preserved it from becoming an appendage to the already enormous territory of France, and the birth of a daughter to the King of the Romans rendered Louis careless of the treaty with England, which he abandoned for the prospect of negociating a marriage with the house of Burgundy, which promised to secure to him a portion of the coveted dominions.*

Symptoms of the French king's intended breach of faith had long been manifest to all except the trusting Edward and his sanguine consort, who, notwithstanding the assurances of the ambassadors from Bretagne and Burgundy would not believe that they had been deceived by their artful ally. The members of the English cabinet were mute, for their silence had been purchased with foreign gold, and Edward himself unwilling to risk the loss of his pension forbore even to remonstrate until the king's duplicity was too apparent to admit the shadow of a doubt. Roused from his lethargy the king dispatched the Lord Howard upon an embassy to Paris to demand the immediate accomplishment of the marriage. Louis no longer compelled to disguise his sentiments haughtily refused compliance, and threatened to withdraw the annual payment of the fifty thousand crowns, one of the articles of the same degrading treaty, by which Edward had been duped to forego the hope of regaining the fertile provinces won by his ancestors, of diminishing the power of France,

* Comines.

and of preserving the persecuted vassals of that encroaching monarchy from utter ruin. CHAP. VI.

About the same time the King of Scotland broke 1478.
off his engagements with Edward, and the enraged monarch suspecting that he had been secretly stimulated to this perfidy by the intrigues of Louis, immediately commenced preparations for the invasion of Scotland; being anxious to reduce his hostile neighbour, that he might leave England secure from his incursions, while, if Louis should finally retract his plighted word, he proceeded to humble the power and insolence of France. The quarrel between the two sovereigns was fierce and rancorous; James branded Edward with the title of robber, and the English monarch retorted with bitter acrimony. Both parties seemed equally anxious for war. James commanded his army in person, and the English forces were led by the Duke of Gloucester; con- 1482.
tinual skirmishes occurred upon the marches between the borderers, seldom restrained from committing mutual depredations in more peaceable times; but no general engagement took place, and two years elapsed without producing any event of importance.

The King of Scotland had long been at variance with his nobility; the society of a rude and barbarous aristocracy possessed no charm for a prince imbued with a taste for the fine arts; valuing the elegant accomplishments far above the mere outward insignia of rank, he collected around him a circle of foreigners (the more odious on that account), distinguished for their mental acquirements, but of low birth, and therefore highly disdained by prejudiced ignorant men, proud of their ancestry, and incapable

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of estimating the refinements of the despised favourites. The Duke of Albany and the Earl of Mar, the king's brothers, shared in the discontent of the nobles, and James with a view to strike terror into the confederacy which he suspected had been formed against him, arrested them both, and confined them in separate prisons. Albany, aided by the captain of a French vessel, contrived to make his escape from Edinburgh castle, the scene of his incarceration, and flying to Paris remained some time in exile. The Earl of Mar less fortunate was accused of endeavouring to compass the king's death by the practice of magic arts, a charge which however malicious, was sanctioned by the superstition of the times, and being condemned by the royal council, was led to the Cannongate, where, spared the ignominy of the common mode of execution, he was suffered to expire from the loss of blood occasioned by the opening of a vein.*

Albany, burning to revenge his own wrongs and his brother's death, eagerly profited by the animosities of the two crowns, and repairing to the English court sought the friendship of its sovereign. Asserting the illegitimacy of James, a declaration somewhat justified by the scandalous reports which had clouded the fair fame of Mary of Gueldres, the dowager queen, he proclaimed himself king of Scotland, engaged to perform homage to Edward for his crown, and to deliver up the town and castle of Berwick; he also promised to relinquish the national alliance with France, and to apply to the church for permission to marry one of the English princesses,

* Buchanan.

an article in the treaty which suited Edward's peculiar anxiety for the elevation and aggrandizement of his daughters, and which he eagerly accepted, although the duke was already fettered in matrimonial bonds with two ladies, still living to claim the partnership of his throne. Edward agreed in return to afford the duke the assistance of an army in his projected enterprize.

The confederates commenced their march at the head of twenty-five thousand men, and laid siege to Berwick; the town surrendered immediately, but the castle holding out with desperate determination detained the invaders before its walls. In the interim a sudden revolution took place which completely changed the affairs of the king of Scotland; surrounded by his favourites he had advanced with the great lords and their retainers as far as Lauder. The nobles, more intent upon the redress of their own real or fancied grievances, than anxious to prosecute the war against England, met together in the church* to plot the ruin of their sovereign's councillors, or according to their own statement, to deliver him from a crew of upstart minions who had poisoned his ear and led him into the commission of many evils. Not one hesitated to pronounce sentence of death upon these hated rivals; but even the reckless valour of this daring band of conspirators was checked by the difficulties of the undertaking; the dauntless Earl of Angus, perceiving the dread and irresolution of his companions, sprang up, and offered himself as their leader, and at the moment that every sword was unsheathed, Cochran, an

* Lindsey.

CHAP. VI.

architect, whose exaltation to the peerage by the illustrious title of Mar, had given unconquerable umbrage, ignorant of his danger insolently entered the fierce assembly; the enraged nobles rushed upon the intruder, and accompanying the action with contemptuous speeches, tore the gold chains and the jewelled horn from his neck. "My lords," he exclaimed, "is it jest or earnest?" "Good earnest," they replied, "and so thou shalt find;" and giving him to the custody of their followers, burst into the king's tent, dragged six of his favourites from his presence to the bridge, where they were immediately sacrificed to party rage, being hung over the side, Cochran elevated in scorn above the rest. It is said, that one of these devoted persons was saved by springing up behind the monarch who instantly took horse and flying to Edinburgh, threw himself into the castle, where he was detained a prisoner during the triumph of the nobles, who, notwithstanding their late violence, treated him with respect, issuing all their orders in his name.

The Dukes of Gloucester and Albany on learning the news hastened to Edinburgh with sixteen thousand men, whom they encamped at Restairig, in its close vicinity; the city surrendered, and Gloucester entered it alone, having much to his credit as a military commander, maintained strict discipline amongst the soldiers, whose orderly demeanour and excellent conduct was the subject of just encomium.* The Duke of Albany appeared to be at the summit of his ambitious hopes, but when all eyes were turned in expectation of his seizure of the crown,

* Drummond.

he either became alarmed, or relented in favour of so near a relative, and suffering mutual friends to mediate between him and his brother, promised to renew his oath of allegiance upon receiving an unconditional pardon, and the restoration of all his honours. CHAP. VI.

In this treaty the claims of the king of England were not disregarded; the duke and his associates engaged that the provost and merchants of Edinburgh should give security for the repayment of the several sums of money which Edward had advanced as his daughter Cecily's portion, unless he should still desire the alliance, and to deliver the castle of Berwick into his hands.* Albany then invested Edinburgh castle with an armed force, rescued his brother, and to prove the sincerity of their reconciliation they rode to Holyrood upon the same horse, and slept together in the same bed. The war being thus happily concluded, the Duke of Gloucester returned to Berwick, took possession of the castle, and then marched southwards.

Edward, although the conduct of his brother was highly commended, and he himself was so well satisfied with his zeal and talents that he conferred upon him several valuable grants, which were ratified by the consent of Parliament (eager to show their estimation of the duke's services), was not pleased at the slight advantage which accrued to England, in return for the money (one hundred thousand pounds) which he had lavished upon the expedition; the possession of Berwick, although a desirable acquisition was

* Rymer

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scarcely an equivalent for so large a sum, more particularly as it could not be maintained without a yearly expenditure of ten thousand marks.

And now the last hope of the alliance with France, to which in despite of all the warnings which he had received, Edward still fondly clung, was utterly destroyed. The unfortunate heiress of Burgundy dying in consequence of a fall from her horse, left two children at the mercy of the citizens of Ghent. The intrigues of Louis had secured these headstrong factious men in his interest, and deriding the opposition of Maximilian, who with the insolence of wealth they despised on account of his poverty, they obliged him to consent to the alliance of his baby daughter with the Dauphin of France, and the betrothment was publicly celebrated at Paris amidst universal rejoicings.* The pension also which Louis had engaged that his descendants should pay to Edward IV. and his descendants during the period of one hundred years after his death, was withdrawn; and the crafty monarch now strong enough to insult England with impunity, derided the anger of the credulous negociator whom he had so openly and so shamelessly deceived. Breathing nothing but revenge, Edward entered into a second treaty with the fickle and turbulent Duke of Albany, who had again revolted from his newly pledged allegiance, and appealing to the honourable feelings of a nation ever ready to resent an injury by the sword, seriously prepared to take a sudden and signal vengeance upon his exulting enemy.

* Comines.

CHAP. VI.

But the time had elapsed in which Edward might have renewed the glories of his illustrious forefathers. France was spared a desolating war, and England destined to endure new calamities from civil broils. The king's luxury and intemperance had destroyed his constitution; the rage and anger which burned within him shook an enervated frame; and indulging, as usual, in the gross pleasures of the table, he was taken ill after partaking too largely in the luxuries of a splendid banquet: alarming symptoms soon appeared, a grave yawned before him, and suddenly the follies and crimes of his past life rushed upon his stricken soul, and he vainly endeavoured in the short space which divided him from eternity to repair the sins and errors of a long career of vice. The quarrels and factions of the nobility filled the dying monarch with terror; he saw the evils which clouded the early years of Henry VI. and darkened its close, renewed in the minority of his own offspring; and summoning the nobles to the couch of death, in his almost expiring accents he exhorted them to forego their private animosities and unite with one accord in the protection of the realm.* The Lords Howard, Stanley, and Hastings, who were, though opposed to the queen's relations, the monarch's personal favourites and friends, embraced the Marquis of Dorset in his presence, and each pledged his word to pardon and bury in oblivion all former grievances. Edward, deluded by a hope that those nobles thus solemnly adjured were sincere in their promises, turned his distracted

* Rous.

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thoughts to religious exercises. Struck with late remorse he directed that from his ill-acquired treasures restitution should be made to those from whom he had unjustly wrung the profits of their honest toil; and having thus with fruitless repentance, as far as it regarded the affairs of this world, endeavoured to atone for the miseries in which he had plunged whole families ruined by his tyrannous rapacity, he closed his eyes upon the scene of his despotism and his triumphs, dying prematurely in the forty-first year of his age, after a reign of twenty-one years, in which, notwithstanding the abuse of his naturally fine talents and the absence of every active virtue, he had retained the affection of his subjects.

April. 1483.

An ocean of blood had flowed by Edward's command. He was seldom known to pardon. Victory plumed her wings upon his banner, and cruelty gave a second edge to his conquering sword. The nobles, appalled by the success and the severity which marked his intrepid struggle for supremacy yielded to his government; and instead of haughtily contending as heretofore for their privileges, played the part of smiling courtiers, anxiously conducing to the monarch's festal pleasures, rather than striving to arouse him from the couch of luxurious sloth to new exertions.* Suspicion, the meet companion of ferocity, haunted Edward's dark soul. After the defeat and death of Warwick he established a system of espionage which rendered him perfectly acquainted with the sentiments and conduct of all those persons whose hostility he had any reason to apprehend.

* Continuation of Croyle.

His memory was particularly faithful; he never forgot the face of a single individual whom he had once seen, and recollected every circumstance connected with their lives and characters with astonishing accuracy, notwithstanding the vast accumulation of various information which his inquisitorial policy produced.* Fascinating in his manners, splendid in his household, kind and courteous to the private circle of his intimates, he possessed the happy art of conciliating every class of society; and kept in awe by the vigorous administration which, notwithstanding his indolent propensities, characterized the whole of his reign, the nation forgot or excused his most atrocious offences, and bowed without reluctance to his iron sway. Edward left eight children, two sons and six daughters born in wedlock, an illegitimate son named William, and a daughter Elizabeth by Elizabeth Lucie, one of the three mistresses whom he openly kept in the presence of the queen: a breach of decorum unknown to the English court since the licentious reign of John. CHAP. VI.

The monarch's death was imputed by the French, anxious to claim the honour of having killed a king of England, to grief at the disappointment of the projected alliance with the dauphin; and Louis, hovering himself upon the brink of the grave, rejoiced that his subtlety had over-reached and finally, according to his flattering hopes, destroyed the adversary of whom he stood most in fear.† The body of the deceased king was exposed to public view, naked from the waist upwards, for the space of ten

* Continuation of Croyle. † Comines.

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hours, in which the corpse was visited by the lords spiritual and temporal and the city authorities. His death took place in the palace of Westminster, and his remains were consigned with fitting pomp to the new chapel which he had built at Windsor.

CHAPTER VII.

The King's Love of Dress—Sumptuary Laws—New Fashions—Mode of wearing the Hair—Penalties for making piked Shoes—Costliness of Banquets—Strange Modes of Cookery—Receipts for several Dishes—The Soteltie—Great Feast at the Marriage of Lionel Duke of Clarence—and at subsequent Festivals—Sumptuous Banquet given by Archbishop Neville—Ceremonies observed in taking the Assay—Dearth of the common Necessaries of the Table amidst its Splendour—Amusements of Edward's Court—Sports and Pastimes of the English People—Tournaments—Splendour of the Nobles when appearing in the Lists—Laws of the Tournament—Statutes published by the Earl of Worcester—Military Toys—Caxton laments the Decay of Chivalry—Knights-Errant—Introduction of Tilts—Pastimes of the lower Orders—Masquings and Mummings—Sports of London from old Times—Entertainments devised by the Citizens for the Royal Family—Christmas Games—Festivities at Easter—and on May Day—Poem of Lydgate's—Rejoicings on Saints' Days—Procession of the Watch—Wrestling at Clerkenwell on Saint Bartholomew's Day—Stow laments the Progress of Gaming—Statutes against unlawful Games—Love of Strange Sights—A Turkish Dwarf.

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EDWARD was immoderately attached to the fopperies of dress. He studied new devices for the decoration of his person, continually appearing in some strange and becoming garb of silk or velvet richly ornamented and lined with costly furs. He refused to allow any person beneath the rank of a

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prince of the blood to wear cloth of gold or silk of regal purple, limited gold tissue to dukes, and confined the glittering manufacture in its plainest state entirely to the nobility. Velvet, satin, and damask, by these sumptuary laws, were only permitted to knights and gentlemen; and the lower orders of labourers, artificers, and servants were restricted to the use of cloth not exceeding two shillings a yard.

Monstrelet informs us that during the period of Edward's reign the fashion of dress sustained a considerable alteration. "The ladies and damsels," says the historian, "laid aside their long trains to their gowns, and in lieu of them had deep borders of furs of minever, martin and others, or of velvet; and various articles of a great breadth. They also wore hoods on their heads of a circular form, half an ell or three quarters high gradually tapering to the top. Some had them not so high with handkerchiefs wreathed round them, the corners hanging down to the ground. They wore silken girdles of greater breadth than formerly, with the richest shoes, with golden necklaces much more trimly decked in divers fashions than they were accustomed to wear them. At the same time the men wore shorter dresses than usual. The sleeves of their outward dress and jackets were slashed to shew their wide white shirts. Their hair was so long that it covered their faces and eyes; and on their heads they had cloth bonnets of a quarter of an ell in height. Knights and esquires indifferently wore the most sumptuous golden chains. Even the varlets had jackets of silk, satin, or velvet; and almost all, especially at the courts of princes, wore peaks at their shoes a quarter of an

ell in length. They had also under their jackets large stuffings at their shoulders to make them appear broad, which is a very vanity and perchance displeasing to God; and he who was short dressed to-day, on the morrow had his robe training on the ground. These fashions were so universal that there was not any little gentleman but would ape the nobles and the rich, whether they dressed in long or short robes, never considering the great expence, nor how unbecoming it was to their situation." These foreign modes travelled swiftly to England. An old writer complains that Englishman allowed their hair to grow so long that it hid their foreheads, which bore the mark of the cross in baptism; and that the capes of the tunics and mantles were as short as if they were preparing to be beheaded. "Formerly," observes the satirist, "they were made high that they might stand up to keep the cold out of their necks, but now they are short as if intended to be out of the way of the executioner's axe." Gough remarks the superior elegance of the costume of Edward IV. particularly with respect to female attire. Necklaces fancifully set with precious stones, similar to those mentioned by Monstrelet, appear upon the monumental effigies of ladies of rank; their veils flow gracefully behind their heads, and their robes are ornamented at the bottom with a deep border. "In the middle of the fifteenth century," observes our author, "female dress made great approaches to that worn in the succeeding one; the long sleeves were left off entirely, the mantle exchanged for a flowing gown, tightened more indeed round the waist, but training in the skirts like

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modern dress. The head dress floated more at ease, with veil-like lappets stretched on wires and supported by a stiffened cawl." The absurd custom of wearing pikes to the shoes still continued. Paradin tells us that "the men wore shoes with a point before half a foot long; the richer and more eminent personages wore them a foot, and princes two feet long, which was the most ridiculous thing ever seen; and when men became tired of these pointed shoes, which were called poulaines, they adopted others in their stead denominated duck-bills." Edward IV. disapproved of these unseemly fashions; and in the fourth year of his reign all shoemakers or cobblers in London, or within three miles of the metropolis, were forbidden to make or cause to be made any shoes or buskins with pikes or poulaines exceeding the length of two inches, upon pain of forfeiting twenty shillings.

The king's feasts were gorgeous, and distinguished for the gross hospitality of the times; abundance supplied the place of elegance, and the slight degree of delicacy observed in the cookery was compensated by the gold and silver garniture attached to the principal dishes at great men's tables. The privileges of rank were extended in these days to the serving up of a fowl, "a hole chykyn for a lorde." For a lorde, put no broth thereto, but yolkes of cyren (eggs) beaten." These directions, which appear in a manuscript preserved in the library of the Royal Society, shew the exclusive deference yielded by the commons, and exacted by men of gentle birth. Squirrels were esteemed dainties only fit for "a greate lorde," and a dish of fish if destined for a nobleman

was to be seasoned with "a dragge of fine sugar." A roasted pig sent up to "the borde of a lorde, or feste royal" was to be crossed with bars of silver and gold "foyle." Upon solemn occasions a peacock or pheasant appeared "dight" with its plumage, according to the following receipt. "Take and flee off the skynne with the fedurs, tayle, and nekke, and the hede thereon; then take the skynne with all the fedurs, and lay hit on a table abrode; and strewe thereon grounden comyn; then take the pecokke and roste hym, and endore him with rawe yolkes of egges; and when he is rosted take hym off, and let hym coole awhile, and take and sowe hym in his skynne, and gilde his combe, and so serve hym forthe with the last cours." Amid the dainties of these times "botyr of almondes," seems to have been in much esteem; there are directions for preparing it, but as the process is very simple the reader perhaps may be better pleased to learn the ingredients of more complicated dishes: one entitled "browat farsure," is particularly curious. "Take fresh broth of beef, and red wyne, and boyle hom togeder, and cast thereto clowes, maces, pynes, reisings of corance, gynger mynced, sugre, and swete wyne; and take chippes of bread stepet in broth, and draw hit up with red wyne, and caste into the same pot; and then take conynges parboyled, or elles rabets, for that are better for a lorde, and frie hom in fresh grees, and hole for a lorde; and for other culpon hom of gobettes, and take partriches and pulle hom and cruch hom, and frie hom also: and when the conynges and the partriches ben half friet, cast hom into the same pot, and let hom boyle togeder. And

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for a greate lorde, take squerelles instede of conynges, and dight hom as hit is before saide. And when all this is boyled ynough, take and put thereto a lytel vynegur and saunders, saffron, and pouder of canel streyned with wyne, and gif hit then a boyle after, and set hit down from the fire and caste therein pouder of gynger, and loke that the pottage be rennynge, and then dresse hit, and serve it forth all hole, a conynge and a partriche is a dish for a lorde." The following composition also which seems to be a rich paste of fish, spice, almonds, and sugar, put into egg shells, and crowned with gilded cloves, is scarcely to be paralleled by the most elaborate operations of modern cookery; it bears the name of "cyren gelide:" "Take milk of 1lb of almondes drawen up thick, and sit hit over the fire, and put thereto sugre, and when hit is boyled, set hit on side; and then take soundes of stock-fish, and of codlynge, and one gobet of thornbag, and sethe hom altogether; and when hit is sothern, thrieche oute the water, and bray hit, and in the braying alay it with the same mylk, and cast thereto clowes, and when hit is brayed draw hit thik through a streymour, and hete it over the fire. And take cyren (eggs) avoided all oute that is therein, and save the yolkes als hole as thow may, and wasse hom (the shells) clene; and then put in the stuff als hote into the shelles, and take clowes, and gilde the heddes, and plait hom aboven there hit is voyde, and set hom upright; and when the stuff is colde, pille away the shells, and take leches lumbard cut on leches, and lay hit on chargeours, and strewe above pouder of gynger, and sugre medeled togeder, then

set the cyren (eggs) between and serve it forthe." Besides these and similar highly seasoned dishes, the tables of the great boasted "tost roialle," "potage de frumerty," "crem of almondes," "appelun for a lorde," &c. &c. But the crown and grandeur of a banquet however splendidly furnished with confections, wild fowl, game, fish, and meat, "both sodden and rost," consisted in the soteltie or subtlety, a non-descript edifice composed of jelly, paste, or blanc manger, and labelled about with verses which usually, contained some coarse or unfathomable jest. Fabian gives a full description in his chronicle of three of these popular devices, which appeared at the coronation feast of Queen Catherine, wife of Henry V. The first course was graced by "a sotyltie," called a pellycan, syttynge on her nest with her byrdes, and an image of Saynt Katheryne holdinge a booke, and disputynge with the doctours, holdynge a reson in her right hande, sayinge "Madame le rayne," and the pellycan as an answere: "là est la signe, et du roy pur tenir isy, et à tout sa gent, elle mete sa entent." Next was served a soteltie named a panter, with an image of Saynt Katheryne, with a whale in her hande, and a rolle with a reson in that other hande, sayinge: "Le royne ma fille, in ceste ile par bonne reson anes renoun." There was also a march pane, garnyshed with dyuerse fygures of angellys amonge the whiche was cut an ymage of Saynt Kathryn holding this reson: "Il est escrit, pur voir et dit, per mariage pur cest quene ne dure," and lastly, a sotiltie named a tigre lookyng in a mirror, and a man sitting on horsebacke clene armyd, holdyng in his armys a tiger whelp, with this reson: "Par force sang reson in

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ay pryse ceste beste," and with his one hand making a countenance of throwynge of miror at the great tigre, the which held this reson: "Gile the mirrour ne fete distour." And amid other splendid dishes, "Leche lumbarde flourished with colars of esses and brome coddes of gold in a target with the arms of the kings and the queens departed, and Flampan florysshed with a escochen rural, theryn three crownes of golde and plaited with floure de lise of golde and flowers of camomile wrought in confections."

Nothing could exceed the profuse splendour of the banquets of the middle ages; Stow tells us, that at the marriage of Lionel Duke of Clarence, there was a rich feast in which above thirty courses were served at table, and the fragments that remained were more than sufficient to have served a thousand people. The entertainment given in honour of the second nuptials of Henry IV., in 1403, consisted of six courses: the first of these was of flesh and fowl, the last three chiefly of fish.* The banquets at the coronation of the consort of Henry V. and of that of Henry VI., described by Fabian, were equally magnificent; but all preceding feasts were surpassed by that given at the enthronization of George Nevill Archbishop of York, in the reign of Edward IV. The whole detailed account is to be found in Leland's collection,† who, previous to entering into particulars, gives a list of the "goodly provision made for the same," by which the reader may judge of the magnitude of the preparations. There were three hundred quarters of wheat, three hundred tuns of ale,

* Stow. † Vol. vi.

one hundred tuns of wine, one pipe of ipocrasse, one hundred and four oxen, six wild bulls, one thousand sheep, three hundred and four calves, the same number of porkers, four hundred swans, two thousand geese, one thousand capons, two thousand pigs, four hundred plovers, three times that number of quails, two thousand four hundred fowls called rees, one hundred and four peacocks, four thousand mallards and teals, two hundred and four cranes, an equal number of kids, two thousand chickens, the same number of pigeons, four thousand conies, two hundred and four bitterns, four hundred heron shews, two hundred pheasants, five hundred partridges, four hundred woodcocks, one hundred curlews, one thousand egritts, "five hundred and more" stags, bucks, and roes, four thousand cold pasties of venison, one thousand pasted dishes of jellies, three thousand plain dishes of jellies, four thousand cold tarts baked, three thousand cold custards baked, fifteen hundred hot pasties of venison, two thousand custards hot, three hundred and eight pikes and breams, twelve porpoises and seals, and lastly "spices, sugared delicates, and wafers plenty."

The guests were disposed in different apartments and at different tables in the great and lower hall, the chief chamber, and the gallery, sitting according to the respective rank of each. All the nobility of the land were present, an immense concourse of dignified ecclesiastics, the mayor of the staple of Calais, the mayor of York, and all the worshipful men of the city. The great lawyers, a fair assembly of peeresses and their attendant ladies of honour. Gentlemen and gentlewomen "of worship." Four

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hundred and twelve gentlemen franklins, and head yeoman, who sate in the lower hall, and were "twice filled and served," and upwards of four hundred servants of the nobility, accommodated in the gallery and also "twice filled and served." The names of the great lords and other persons who officiated, were first, the Earl of Warwick as steward, the Earl of Northumberland as treasurer, the Lord Hastings comptroller, the Lord Willoughby carver, the Lord John of Buckingham cup bearer, Sir Richard Strangwicke server, Sir Waller Worley marshal, and eight other knights for the hall: also eight squires, beside two other servers, and Sir John Malybery panter. The serjeant of the king's ewery as ewerer, Greystock and Nevill keepers of the cupboard, and Sir John Brecknock surveyor in the hall. It would be impossible to enumerate all the different dishes for which such abundant provision had been made, but amid the chief dainties, there was "a peacock in his hakell," a second of these imperial birds with "a gilt neb," a "dolphin in foyle," "leche lumbart gilt," "swan with gelandine as a sutteltie," a sutteltie of Saint George, another of a hart, a third of a dragon, a sutteltie of Sampson, and lastly one of St. William, with his coat armour between his hands, wafers, and ipocrasse, and Damask water to wash after dinner. There was also brawn and mustard with malmsey, and three courses of fish, in which, besides a great many not mentioned in the first rough bill of fare, were lobsters, jowls of fresh sturgeon, small minnows, ling in jelly, baked salmon, lampreys, and several others dressed in various ways. The turkey was at this period unknown in England; its

place was supplied at the board by fowls whose presence modern taste no longer sanctions, cranes and heron shews. Seals and porpoises are also excluded in these days, though formerly few banquets were served up without them. At the coronation dinner of Queen Catherine before mentioned, we read of "porpies rosted." These stately festivals were conducted with ceremonies and formalities of the most dull, solemn and tedious description. Every one of the dishes served up was to be tasted by the person who carried it, and giving the assay, as it was called, entailed a tiresome and nearly endless task upon the carver and panter, who were appointed for the purpose. The usher was directed to see the hall trimmed in every part, hung with a cloth of estate, and supplied with four cushions of estate of silk or cloth of gold, the boards and cupboards set in order, a sufficient number of chairs and stools to furnish the different tables, and a good fire kindled. It was the province of the yeoman of the ewery to decorate the cupboard with a cloth of estate, and to place the basin and the cup for the assay under the "chiefe napkins." Then the panter provided bread, salt, and trenchers, with a broad and a narrow knife and a spoon, which he placed with much care under "a coverpane of diaper of fine silk," and in like manner the cupboard was made ready with salt, bread, trenchers, napkins, spoons and other necessaries, belonging to the table." All these things performed, it was the duty of the panter to inquire whether the cooks were in attendance with the viands, and if they were, he informed the marshal, who commanded the carver, cup bearer, and sewer to wash at the ewery,

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and after this ceremony, the yeomen of the ewery armed the carver with a towel placed across the left shoulder, and under the right arm, and laid also the napkins of estate for the assay on the same shoulder, and the carver's own napkin on his left arm. The sewer likewise underwent the same ceremony. "Then," says the minute writer of these instructions, "the marshal with the carver must go toward the high table, and the panter to follow them, making their obeisance first in the midst of the hall, and again before the high Deane, then the marshal and the panter must stand still, and the carver must go to the table and there kneel on his knee, and then arise with a good countenance, and properly take off the coverpane of the salt, and give it to the panter, which must stand still." Then after a multitude of tedious ceremonies the carver is desired to uncover the salt which has been laid in a napkin under the diaper pane of silk before described, and with a cornet of bread to touch it in four places, and with his hand to make a flourish over it, and give it to the panter to eat for the assay thereof. The table is then to be furnished with trenchers, each one after another, and laid quadrant one beside another, and bread placed on the left hand of the lord of the banquet. In the meantime the yeoman of the livery is to be employed in laying the towel of estate upon the marshal's left shoulder, who is directed to give the cup and basin of assay to the cup-bearer, and to make his obedience to the chief personage or master of the house, kissing the towel and placing it on his left shoulder. The assay of the water is next to be taken by the cup-bearer,

and after that is done it is the duty of the lord of the feast to give the end of the towel to some fit person to hold, until all the principal guests shall have washed according to their degree, in basins prepared for them.

Directions for the arrangement of the company follow, and after the adjustment of so important a point, the sewer is to go to the dresser, and then take assay of every dish: "he next gives to the stewards and the cooks to eat of all porridges, mustardes and other sauces," taking the assay we are told, "with cornets of trenchers of his own cutting, and that is thus. He taketh a cornet of bread in his hand, and toucheth three parts of the dish, and maketh a florishe over it, and giveth it to the aforenamed persons to eate. And of every stewed meat, rosted, boyled, or broyled, being fish or flesh, he cutteth a little thereof, and if it be baked meat closed, unclose it, and take assay thereof as ye do of sauces, and that is with cornets of bread, and so with all other meates, as custards, tarts and jelly, and other such like." The ministers of the church in the interim to be employed, "after the old custom, in singing some proper or godly carol."

The whole of this long ceremony of tasting the dishes is to be gone over again, for the marshal and the steward are to usher in the course, "making obeisance in the midst of the hall, and before the high table," after which it is the duty of the marshal to stand still, while the sewer kneels upon his knee, beside the carver, as the latter receives the dishes, and uncovers them. Then the carver of all potages and sauces, is to take assay with a cornet of trencher

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bread of his own cutting, touching three different parts of the dish, and making a flourish over it, and giving the bread to the sewer, and the bearer of the dish, who are to eat it kneeling. The carver is instructed to take assay of stewed, broiled, fried, or roast meats, be they flesh or fish, cutting a part of each with a broad knife, and if it should be any sort of fowl, taking a slice from the outside of the leg or wing, the baked meats if they should be enclosed in paste, are to be uncovered and a piece of bread dipped in the gravy and given to the bearer; and a small portion is to be cut from all "subtelties, marchpanes or leeches." "In the mean time," continues our author, "the marshal goeth to the buttery to see the covered cup be right served, and giveth to the butler his assay, and delivereth to the cup bearer the cup of estate; and when the cup bearer cometh to the table, after his obeisance, he kneeleth on his knee and putteth forth three or four drops of ale into the inside of the cover of the cup and suppes it for his assay. Then he sets the cup beside the lord, and covereth it, and then all the table is served with like. Mark when the first rost meate, being fish or flesh is broken, then the cup bearer goeth to the seller, and when the cup bearer cometh to the table he useth himself as afore. The usher must see for the order of the hall, and every place where his office doth lie. The sewer must see that there want no sauces for any dish of his kind. Then the carver must see that the lords have no foule trenchers, but kepe them clean or else change them, and so see that he have a good eye and a quick hand, and not to be over hastie; then carve the lord of every dish a

little, as they be set in by the hand of the sewer, till the second course be ready, and see that ye have a good countenance although anything do quayle in your hands. When the lords drinketh, be it wine or ale, the cup bearer holdeth the cover under the cup for the estate thereof, or else he maketh a profer of estate so far as he may reach with his arm, not offending the sewer in any wise. And when the last dish of the first course is set in, the sewer goeth to the dresser, and as he did in the first course, so he must do at the second course in every point, as touching the assay with other things, and when he is ready the ministers of the church do sing solemnly. Then the marshal and the sewer goeth together to the high table before the course. Then the marshal standeth still and the sewer kneeleth on his knee, and delyvereth every dish to the carver as he did in the first course. All this done see the lorde have no foule trenchers, but give him clean, and see he want no bread, and so carve on to the last dish."*

The ceremonies to be observed in clearing the tables after the repast shall be concluded, are equally tedious without being so entertaining as those quoted above; the reader therefore may be spared the dull detail.

From the description of the plate belonging to Henry VI. and that of the Earl of Warwick and Sir John Fastolfe already given, together with the extracts which will appear from the wills of the times, some idea may be formed of the shining splendour of the gold and silver ornaments which graced the banquets of great men. These glittering uten-

* Leland's Collection, vol. vi.

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sils were richly and curiously carved by goldsmiths, fast rising to the summit of their art, men whose delicate touches impelled the genius of Benvenuto Cellini to those master strokes which have immortalized his name; but notwithstanding the prodigality of magnificence displayed in the decorations of the table, the noble guests were obliged to dip their fingers into the dishes, forks being a much later invention.

Dancing composed one of the chief amusements of the court of Edward IV. it was a pastime easily revived even in the most brief season of peace, and the civil wars had been less unfavourable to the gay revel of a ball room than to the solemn dramatic representations which formed a principal feature in the festivities of preceding reigns. The clerks' company and the scholars of St. Paul's school, were usually the authors and the actors of the mysteries and moralities which ushered the regular drama into England. They are recorded to have performed for three days successively before Richard II. and his court at Clerkenwell; and in 1378 they presented a petition to that monarch, praying him to prohibit some inexpert people from representing the histories of the Old Testament to the prejudice of the said clergy, who had been at a vast expense to get up the same entertainment at Christmas.* At the accession of Henry IV. there was a great play enacted of matter from the creation of the world, which was even a more tedious infliction than the former, being of eight days' continuance. The chief part of the nobility attended the performance, but no mention is made of the king's presence, who probably spared

himself the painful constraint of assuming the semblance of pleasure at the loyal efforts of his subjects for his amusement. * The performers, whose usurpation of the churchman's office was the subject of ecclesiastical complaint, were composed of itinerant bands who strolled from castle to castle and village to village, exhibiting specimens of their art to all classes of persons. These wandering actors were of higher antiquity than their clerical rivals, and the large sums of money which rewarded their efforts induced the monks to commence so lucrative an occupation upon their own account, and denouncing the representation of profane stories as licentious and immoral, introduced and monopolized all the subjects selected from the sacred writings, and by this artful expedient made a considerable addition to the enormous revenues of the church. The ecclesiastical plays were usually performed in churches or chapels, upon temporary scaffolds erected for that purpose; and in order to render the entertainment more popular and diverting, his satanic majesty, attended by a grotesque train of inferior imps, was made to enact the part of the clown or merry andrew, and by his gibbering squeaks, buffetings, and strange contortions, frequently convulsed the audience with laughter.

In the troublesome period which succeeded the breaking out of the civil wars, scenic exhibitions in the metropolis were confined to the pageants which the taste of the city companies provided for the entertainment of royalty in the public streets, where the cardinal virtues walked in procession, accom-

* Strutt.

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panied by angels: and pagan heroes, heathen gods, and scriptural characters, were mingled together in strange yet gay confusion. Robin Hood and his fair maid Marian, with their train of merry archers, clad in the forest garb, winding their bugle horns and "wilde or selvage men," quaintly attired in hairy suits, cinctured around the waist, and crowned with green leaves, were favourite personages in these stately shows. Upon Lord Mayor's Day wicker-work giants, and paste-board dragons were added; each company bore the emblems of their art before them, and hobby-horses, morrice dancers, and mummers, filled up the rude yet gaudy and picturesque spectacle.

Sir John Norman, a draper, and chief magistrate in the reign of Henry VI. introduced the water procession in his mayoralty, an improvement which so much delighted the citizens that they composed and sung a ballad in his honour, beginning with "Row thy boat, Norman!"* But unquestionably no amusement invented in these or any succeeding ages ever equalled the splendour and animation of the tournament. "At the celebration of these pastimes," says Strutt, "the lists were superbly decorated and surrounded by the pavilions belonging to the champions, ornamented with their arms, banners, and banerolls; the scaffolds for the reception of the nobility of both sexes who came as spectators, and those especially appointed for the royal family, were hung with tapestry and embroideries of gold and silver; every person on such occasions appe[illegible] the greatest advantage, decked in sumptuou[illegible]

* Stow.

and every part of the field presented to the eye a rich display of magnificence; we may also add the splendid appearance of the knights engaged in the sports; themselves and their horses most gorgeously arrayed, as well as their esquires and pages, together with the minstrels and heralds, who superintended the ceremonies, all of them being clothed in costly and glittering apparel. Such a show of pomp, where wealth, beauty, and grandeur, were concentred as it were in one focus, must altogether have formed a wonderful spectacle, and made a strong impression on the mind, which was not a little heightened by the cries of the heralds, the clangor of the trumpets, the clashing of the arms, the rushing together of the combatants, and the shouts of beholders; hence the popularity of these exhibitions may be easily accounted for.

"The tournament and the just, and especially the latter, afforded to those who were engaged in them an opportunity of appearing before the ladies to the greatest advantage; they might at once display their taste and opulence by the costliness and elegance of their apparel, and their prowess as soldiers; therefore these pastimes became fashionable among the nobility, and probably for the same reason they were prohibited to the commoners."

The descriptions which have been preserved of the meeting at Gosford Green, near Coventry, between the Dukes of Hereford and Norfolk, in the reign of Richard II. afford a lively idea of the magnificence which was heaped together upon these occasions; each combatant strove to outshine the other in the splendour of his trappings. Boling-

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broke sent to the armourers of Galeazzo, Duke of Milan, for his coat of mail; and Norfolk procured his brilliant habiliments from Germany; both appeared at the lists accompanied by their friends and relations, and attended by a numerous train richly attired in silk embroidered with silver, and bearing staffs in their hands to keep the crowd in order.

Hereford, as the challenger, rode first to the barriers, mounted on a white courser barbed with green and blue velvet, embroidered with golden swans and antelopes, himself completely armed at all points, and bearing a drawn sword in his hand. Having answered the questions of the heralds, he sheathed his sword, drew his beaver down, dismounted, and seated himself on a chair of green velvet, placed within a traverse of green and blue velvet at one end of the lists. Richard soon after made his appearance, surrounded by his whole court, glittering in jewels and cloth of gold, the Earl of St. Paul, who came from France for the express purpose of witnessing the combat, and a guard of ten thousand men. The heralds proclaimed the presence of the Duke of Hereford, and Norfolk instantly rode forward completely armed, with his horse covered with crimson velvet, embroidered with silver lions and mulberry trees, and whilst the preliminary ceremonies were performing by the earl marshal, seated himself in a chair of crimson velvet, canopied with red and white damask.

The laws of the tournament were regulated according to the pleasure of either of those by whom the sport was instituted, or by the commissioners

appointed to settle all preliminaries, and to preside at the field; and consequently, although due regard was always paid to ancient customs, the observances varied as fashion or convenience dictated. The particular exploits which should be deemed worthy of the prizes were expressly stated, and the nature and value of the prizes declared: and ample instructions being given to the heralds who proclaimed the tournament, all the combatants were made acquainted with the rules which they were bound to obey, upon pain of forfeiting their privileges, and exclusion from the sports. Dr. Meyrick tells us, that it was not for a considerable period subsequent to the establishment of these martial exercises, that the lists and barriers, afterwards so universal, were erected. The knights originally assembled at the four angles of an open plain, and ran in parties against each other. The first lists consisted of cords stretched before the different companies previous to the commencement of the tournament, and the imminent danger attending these pastimes occasioned the invention of the double lists, first adopted in France, which, besides the cord above-mentioned, consisted of a paling put up in the centre, so that the knights might run from one end to the other without coming in contact except with their lances.

Gorgeous pavilions were erected for the combatants, and all those who intended to engage in the sports were required to display their arms at their respective stations, in order that the judges of the field might exercise their right to examine them, reject or approve as they conformed to the laws previously established. This ceremony accomplished,

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the arms were restored, and the heralds nailed up the shield of each challenger in front of his pavilion, and planted his banner on the parade before it, afterwards performing the same office to the acceptors. All the arrangements being completed, the kings-at-arms and heralds made the circuit of the field, crying aloud, "*A l'achevier Chevalier, &c.*" (To achievement, knights and esquires, to achievement.) The knights then issued from their pavilions, and rushed to the sport, which they continued or abandoned at the direction of the judges appointed to preside; encouraged to proceed by the cry of "*Laisser les aler.*" (Let them go on;) or stayed by the command, "*Ployer vos baniers,*" the signal for the conclusion of the tournament. The banners were rolled up, and the knights and esquires permitted to retire, the distribution of the prizes being almost invariably reserved to a future occasion. Every knight and esquire was allowed to have a page armed within the lists, but divested of all offensive weapons, to attend upon him, and give him such assistance in adjusting his cumbrous accoutrements as he might require: three serviteurs were afterwards admitted for the same purpose. The knight was also allowed to unhelm himself at pleasure, should he sustain inconvenience from the heat, and the courteous laws of the tournament secured him from molestation while in this defenceless situation. The kings-at-arms and heralds, we are informed by the author* who has so ably illustrated the usages of ancient times, were privileged to wear the blazon arms of those by whom the sport was insti

* Meyrick in his admirable treatise upon ancient armour.

besides which they were entitled to six ells of scarlet cloth as their fee, and had all their expenses defrayed during the continuation of the tournament. By the law of arms they had a right to the helmet of every knight when he made his first essay in the field, which became their perquisite as soon as the sports concluded. They also claimed six crowns each as nail money for affixing the blazon of arms to the pavilions. The kings-at-arms held the banners of the two chief barons on the day of the tournament, the heralds those of their confederates, according to the respective rank of each.

A manuscript preserved in the Harleian collection presents us with a detailed account of the regulations observed at tournaments in the reign of Edward IV., in whose time, although the gallant Rivers achieved exploits worthy of chivalry's brightest day, we must look in vain for the glorious fields recorded in the annals of his predecessors. Monstrelet* observes, that the accomplished Wydeville in his combat with the bastard of Burgundy, "performed his deed of arms greatly to his credit; but it did not last long, for, as it was done to please the King of England, he would not suffer the combat to continue any time, so that it was rather for amusement." However, the tilt still maintained its ground as a fashionable exercise, and as the manner of conducting tournaments in the reign of Edward IV. was [illegible] from the best authenticated laws of older [illegible] those who are interested in the martial sports [illegible]ner ages may derive pleasure from the perusal [illegible]xtract from the document above-mentioned,

* Johnes' Translation, vol. x.

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which is entitled, *" Ordinances, statutes, and rules made by John Tiptoft earl of Worcester, constable of England, by the king's commandement at Windsor, the twenty-ninth of May, anno sixto Edwardi quarti, to be observed and kepte in all manner of jouste of peers royal within the realme of England, referring alwayes to the queene and to the ladyes present the attrebution and gift of the prize, after the manner and forme accustomed to be attributed for their demerits, according to the articles ensuinge:

" First, whoso breaketh most spears as they ought to be broken shall have the prize.

" He that or whoso hitteth iij times in the syghte of the healme shall have the prize.

" Whoso meteth two times cornell to cornell shall have the prize.

" Whoso beareth a man downe with stroke of spear shall have the prize.

" Here followeth wherefore the prize shall be lost:

" Who stryketh a horse shall have no prize.

" Who hitteth the toyle iij times shall have no prize.

" Here followeth how spears shall be allowed * * * *

" For the prize to be given:

" Whoso beareth a man downe from his sadle or pulleth him to the earth horse and manne, shall have the prize before him that stryketh cornell to cornell ij times.

" He that stryketh the cornell ij times shall have the prize before him that stryketh the syghte ij

* MSS. Ashmole, 765, MS. Bibl. Harleian, 1776, printed by Dallaway.

"He that stryketh the syghte iij times, shall have the prize before hym that breaketh most staves or spears.

"If there be any man that fortuneth in this wyse whych shall be deemed longest to have bidden the field helmed, and to have done the fairest course, and to have given the greatest strokes, who have holpen himself best with his spear, he shall have the prize.

"Two blowes at the passage and tenne at the joining, more or lesse as they make it all grypes, shockes and fowle play forbidden. After antient order and honor of armes, it is not lawful for anie man to do the deedes of feates of armes in any just royale within the realme of England except he be well known unto the king of armes of the province, to be a gentleman of arms, bloud, and descent.

"All such gentlemen as determine to be challengers of any just or tournay, shall make their humble request to the king's majestie for his gracious licence that they may make their chalenge according to the laws of armes, at such time and place as his grace shall think meet. And the king's licence obtained, the gentlemen challengers shall call unto them the king at armes in whose province the tournay is to be done, and with his determination agree for the proclamation by him to be made after the most antientest laws of armes."

"Persons of rank," says Strutt, "were taught in [redacted]eir childhood to relish such exercises as were of a [redacted]l nature, and the very toys that were put into [redacted]hands as playthings were calculated to bias [redacted]ind in their favour." A plate in this au-

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thor's interesting work upon the sports and pastimes of the people of England exhibits two views of a knight on horseback completely equipped for the just, taken from a small brass figure, the production of the fifteenth century, which ran upon wheels, and was so constructed as to afford a mimic representation of the principal incidents of the tilt: the knight being moveable and liable to be unhorsed by the shock of a similar antagonist, each being violently impelled towards the other by means of a cord fastened in front of the apparatus, and the interest which every class of persons took in these warlike amusements is strikingly manifested by the spirited representations of chivalric sports continually occurring in the illumination of MSS, a favourite and elegant art belonging to this age. Yet even at the period of which we now treat, the tournament was susceptible of some decay. Caxton complains of the diminution of the warriors' ardour for this noble exercise. "O, ye knyghtes of Englonde," he exclaims, "where is the custome and noble usage of chyvalrie that was used in those days? What do ye now but go to the baynes and play at dyse? And some not well advysed, use not honest and good rule against all ordre of knyghthode. Leve this! leve it! and read the noble volumes of Sangreal, of Lancelot, of Galehad, of Trystram, of Perce-Forest, of Percyvale, of Gawayne, and many moe. I would demande a question if it should not displease: how many knyghtes ben ther now in Englonde that hav[illegible] th'use and th'exercice of a knyghte? That [illegible] wyte, that he knoweth his horse and he him." grandeur of the tournament and the eager [illegible]

which it afforded to the warlike spirits of the nation, appeared in its highest and most animating degree during the long and brilliant interval which elapsed from the accession of Richard I. to the loss of France under Henry VI. From this time notwithstanding many dazzling and noble displays of knightly skill, they were evidently in a languishing state, and although even down to the field of gold, where Henry VIII. and the Emperor Charles appeared attended by all the continental chivalry, attempts were made to revive and emulate the glories of former days, there was not a single nobleman after the decease of Richard Beauchamp Earl of Warwick, in the year 1439, who participated in the excessive attachment to the just, manifested by Roger Mortimer, Sir Thomas Chandos, Sir John Holand, and others, who like the errant knights of old rode over Christendom seeking for antagonists, challenging the whole world to feats of arms, and continually improving their warlike amusements by the invention of some new and courteous device. The period to which we refer was the golden age of chivalry in England, unless we admit of the exploits of King Arthur's Knights of the Round Table as genuine adventures. During the first two hundred years which followed the Norman conquest, the just was disgraced by the brutal ardour of the combatants. *Weever informs us that Gilbert Earl of Pembroke and Marshal of England, in 1241, proclaimed a tournament at Hertford in scorn of the king's au[redacted]y, whereby such sports were forbidden, in [redacted] he was killed. "These kind of justs and [redacted]naments," continued our author, "were brought

* Funeral Monuments.

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in with King Stephen, and practised in many places in England in such an outrageous manner, and with such slaughter of gentlemen, that to suppress so heathenish a disport, it was decreed by parliament that whosoever therein were slain, should want christian burial and their heirs disinherited."

*The lower orders, excluded from the tournament, had recourse to the exercise of the quintain, which was not prohibited to any class of the people, and which from the earliest times had been in use for the purpose of training warriors to deeds of arms. It was practised both on horseback and on foot, on land and on the water, and consisted of the dexterous management of a staff or spear, whilst urged at full speed against a shield attached to a pole, made fast to a boat, or planted in the earth. If the blow did not strike the mark exactly in the centre, very disastrous consequences followed the tyro's awkward attempt. Failure on the river was attended by immediate precipitation into the flood, and much merriment was occasioned on shore by a simple piece of mechanism, which was infallibly set in motion to the disgrace and damage of the unsuccessful candidate whenever he aimed an awkward stroke. To these amusements were added the tricks of jugglers, the performances of wandering bands of minstrels, and the various disguisings, which at Christmas and other festivals rendered every house, from the king's palace to the yeoman's cottage, the scene of a rude species of carnival.

Fantastic vizors, chiefly shaped into the re[illegible] blance of the heads of beasts, frequently cro[illegible]

* Strutt.

with horns or surmounted by high pointed caps, and buckram tunics grotesquely painted with coloured devices, formed the usual costume of the masqueraders. The wardrobe rolls of Edward III. contain a list of eighty dresses of this description, and the illuminated manuscripts before mentioned, give numerous specimens of odd looking figures dancing in this strange and droll attire. The buckram tunics were of divers colours, and forty-two visors are also enumerated in the above-named record, "of various similitudes, that is, fourteen of the faces of women, fourteen of the faces of men with beards, fourteen heads of angels made of silver, twenty-eight crests, fourteen mantles embroidered with heads of dragons, fourteen white tunics wrought with heads and wings of peacocks, fourteen tunics of English linen painted, and as many tunics embroidered with stars of gold and silver."

Stow in his survey of London has quoted Fitzstephen's description of the amusements of the people of England, assuring us that the "like exercises" were continued to his own time. "London," says the latter writer, "for the shewes upon theaters and comicall pastimes hath holy playes, representations of miracles, which holy confessors have wrought; or representations of torments, wherein the constancy of martyrs appeared. Every yeere also on Shrove Tuesday (that we may beginne with children's sports seeing we have all been children) the schoole-boyes doe bring cockes of the game to their master, and all the forenoon they delight themselves with cock fighting. After dinner all the youths goe into the fields to play at the ball. The scholars of

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every school have their ball or bastion in their hands: the ancient and wealthy men of the citie come forth on horsebacke to see the sport of the young men, and to take part of the pleasure in beholding their agility. Every Friday in Lent a fresh company of young men comes into the field on horsebacke, and the best horsemen conduct the rest. Then march forth the citizens' sonnes, and other young men with disarmed lances and shields, and then they practise feats of warre. Many courtiers likewise, when the king lyeth neere, and attendants on noble-men, doe repaire to these exercises, and while the hope of victory doth inflame their mindes, they shew by good proofe how serviceable they would be in martial affaires. In Easter holydays they fight battels on the water. A shield is hanged upon a pole, fixed in the midst of the streeme: a boat is prepared without oares, to be carried by violence of the water, and in the fore part thereof standeth a young man, ready to give charge upon the shield with his launce. If so be he breake his launce against the shield, and doth not fall, he is thought to have performed a worthy deede. If so bee without breaking his launce, he runneth strongly against the shield, down he falleth into the water; for the boat is violently forced with the tide; but on each side of the shield ride two boats, furnished with young men, which recover him that falleth as soon as they may. Upon the bridge, wharfes, and houses by the river side, stand great numbers to see and laugh thereat. In the holy daies all the summer, the youths are exercised in leaping, dancing, shooting, wrestling, casting the stone, and prac-

tising their shields; the maidens trip with their timbrels, and dance as long as they can see. In winter every holiday before dinner, the bores prepared for brawne are set to fight, or els buls or beares are baited. When the greate fenne or moore which watereth the wals of the citie on the north side is frozen, many young men play upon the ice; some striding as wide as they may, do slide swiftly; others make themselves seats of ice, as great as mill-stones, one sits down, many, hand in hand, doe draw him, and one slipping on a sudden, all fall together. Some tye bones to their feet, and under their heeles, and shoving themselves by a little piked staff, doe slide as swiftly as a bird flyeth in the ayre, or an arrow oute of a crosse-bow. Sometimes two run together with a pole, and hitting one the other, either one or both doe fall, not without hurt; some breake their armes, some their legs: but youth (desirous of glory in this sort) exercises itself against the time of warre. Many of the citizens doe delight themselves in hawkes and hounds, for they have liberty of hunting in Middlesex, Hertfordshire, all Chiltron, and in Kent to the water of Cray." To this account Stow adds some very entertaining particulars. "The ball," observes our author, "is used by noblemen and gentlemen in tennis courts, and by people of the meaner sort in open field or street. The marching forth of citizens' sons, and other young men on horsebacke, with disarmed lances and shields, there to practise feats of warre, man against man, hath long since been left off, but in their citie they have used on horsebacke to run at a dead mark called a quinton. This exercise of running at the

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quinton, was practised by the youthful citizens, as well in summer as in winter, namely in the feast of Christmas. I have seen a quinton set upon Cornhill, by the Leaden-hall, when the attendants of the lords of merry disports have runne, and made great pastime; for he that hit not the broad end of the quinton, was of all men laughed to scorn; and he that hit it full, if he rode not the faster, had a sound blowe in his necke with a bag full of sand, hanged on the other end. I have also in the summer season, seen some upon the river of Thames, rowed in wherries, with staves in their hands, flat at the fore-end, running one against another, and for the most part, one or both overthrown and well ducked.

"On the holidays in the summer, the youth of this citie have in the field exercised themselves, in leaping, dancing, shooting, wrestling, casting of the stone or ball, &c. The youth of this citie also have used on holidays, after evening prayer, at their masters' doores to exercise their wasters at Bucklers: and the maidens, one of them playing on a timbril, in syght of their masters and dames, to dance for garlands, hanged thwart the streets; which open pastimes in my youth, being now suppressed, worser practices within doors are to be feared. As for the baiting of buls and beares, they are to this day much frequented, namely in Beargardens, on the Bankside, wherein be prepared scaffolds for beholders to stand upon. Sliding on the ice is now but children's play; but in hawking and hunting many grave citizens at this present have great delight, and do rather want leisure than good-will to follow it." Speaking of the change in dramatic representations which had taken

place in the sixteenth century, and the performances which had superseded in his days the mysteries of moralities of old, Stow says: "Of late time, instead of those stage plays, have been used comedies, tragedies, interludes, and histories, both true and fained; for the acting whereof certain publike places have been erected. Also cockes of the game are yet cherished by divers men for their pleasure, much money being laid on their heads when they fight in pits, whereof some be costly, made for that purpose." Stow also records many triumphant shows devised and conducted at the expence of the citizens of London, in honour of the royal family: one of the most splendid occurred in the year 1377, "made," says the historian, "for disport of the young Prince Richard, sonne to the Black Prince, at the feast of Christmas, and in this manner."

On the Sunday before Candlemas in the night, one hundred and thirty citizens, disguised and well horsed, in a mummery, with sound of trumpets, sackbuts, cornets, shalmes, and other minstrels, and innumerable torch lights of wax, rode from Newgate through Cheap, over the bridge, through Southwark, and so to Kennington beside Lambeth where the young prince remained with his mother, and the Duke of Lancaster, his uncle, the Earls of Cambridge, Hertford, Warwick, and Suffolk, with divers other lords. In the first rank did ride forty-eight in the likeness and habit of esquires, two and two together, clothed in red coats, and gowns of say or sandell, with comely visors on their faces. After them came riding forty-eight knights in the same livery of cote and stuff. Then followed one richly arrayed,

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like an emperor; and after him some distance, one stately tyred like a pope, who was followed by twenty-four cardinals; and after them eight or ten with black visors, not amiable, as if they had been legates from some foreign prince," an odd insinuation, implying that his holiness and the conclave were not without suspicion of having some dealings with the powers of darkness. "These maskers," continues our author, "after they had entered the mannor of Kennington, alighted from their horses, and entered the hall on foot; which done, the prince, his mother, and the lords, came out of the chamber into the hall, whom the mummers did salute, shewing by a paire of dice on the table their desire to play with the young prince; which they so handled, that the prince did alwaies winne when he cast at them. Then the mummers set to the prince three jewels, one after another; which were a bowle of gold, a cup of gold, and a ring of gold, which the prince wonne at three casts. Then they set to the prince's mother, the duke, the earls, and other lords, to every one a ring of gold, which they also did winne. After which they were feasted and the musicke sounded, the prince and the lords danced on the one part with the mummers, who did also dance, which jollity being ended, they were again made to drinke, and then departed in order as they came. The like was to Henry the fourth, in the second of his reign; he then keeping his Christmas at Eltham, twelve aldermen of London and their sonnes, rode in a mumming and had great thanks. Thus much," adds our author, "for sportfull shows and triumphs may suffice. Now for sports and pastimes yearly used,

First in the feast of Christmas, there was in the king's house, wheresoever he was lodged, a lord of misrule, or master of merry disports, and the like had ye in the house of every nobleman of honour, or good worship, were he spirituall or temporall. Among the which the maior of London, and either of the sheriffes, had their several lords of misrule, ever contending, without quarrel or offence, who should make the rarest pastimes to delight the beholders. These lords beginning their rule at Alhallow eve, continued the same till the morrow after the feast of the purification, commonly called Candlemas day: in all which space, there were fine and subtil disguisings, maskes and mummeries, with playing at cards for counters, nayles and points in every house, more for pastime than for gaine.

"Against the feast of Christmas every man's house, as also the parish churches, were decked with holme, ivie, bayes, and whatever the season of the yeare afforded to be greene: the conduits and standards in the streets were likewise garnished. Among the which, I read that in the yeare 1444 by tempest of thunder and lightning, on the first of February at night, Paul's steeple was fired, but with great labour quenched: and toward the morning of Candlemas day at the Leaden-hall in Cornhill, a standard of tree being set up in the midst of the pavement fast in the ground, nayled full of holie and ivie, for disport of Christmas to the people, was torne up and cast down by the malignant spirit, as was thought, and the stones of the pavement all about were cast in the streets, and into divers houses, so that the people were sore agast at the great tempests. In the week

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before Easter had yee great shewes made, for the fetching in of a twisted tree, or with, as they termed it out of the woods, into the king's house, and the like into every man's house of honour and worship. In the moneth of May, namely on May-day in the morning, every man, excepte impediment, woulde walke into the sweet meddows and green woods, there to rejoice their spirits with the beauty and savour of sweet flowers, and with the harmony of birdes praising God in their kind. I find also that in the moneth of May the citizens of London, of all estates, lightly in every parish, or sometimes two or three parishes joyning together, had their several Mayings, and did fetch in May poles, with divers warlike shews, with good archers, morice dancers, and other devices for pastime all the day long; and towards the evening they had stage plaies and bonfires in the streets. Of these Mayings we read, in the reign of Henry the Sixth, that the aldermen and sheriffs of London being on May-day at the Bishop of London's wood in the parish of Stebunheath, and having there a worshipful dinner for themselves and other commers, Lydgate the poet, that was a monk of Bury, sent to them by a pursuivant a joyful commendation of that season, containing sixteen staves in meeter royal, beginning thus,

"Mighty Flora, Goddesse of fresh flowers,
Which clothed hath the soyle in lusty greene,
Made buds to spring, with her sweet showers,
By influence of the sun-shine,
To doe pleasure of intent full cleane,
Unto the states which now sit here,
Hath for dower sent her owne daughter deer.

Making the vertue, that dured in the root,
Called the vertue, the vertue vegetable,
For to transcend most wholesome and most soote,
Into the top this season so agreeable:
The balmy liquor is so commendable
That it rejoyceth with his fresh moisture,
Man, beast, and fowle, and every creature."

"In the months of June and July, on the vigils of festival dayes, and on the same festival dayes in the evenings after the sun setting, there were usually made bone-fires in the streets, every man bestowing wood or labour towards them. The wealthier sort also before their doors neare to the said bone-fires, would set out tables on the vigils furnished with sweete bread and good drinke, and on the festival dayes with meates and drinkes plentifully, whereunto they would invite their neighbours and passengers also to sit, and be merry with them with great familiarity, praising God for his benefits bestowed on them. These were called bone-fires as well of amity amongst neighbours, that being before at controversie, were there by the labour of others reconciled, and made of bitter enemies loving friends; as also for the vertue that a great fire hath to purify infected ayre. On the vigill of Saint John Baptist, and on Saint Peter and Saint Paul the apostles, every man's doore being shaded with green birch, long fennel, Saint John's wort, orpies, white lilies, and such like, garnished upon with garlands of beautiful flowers, had also lamps of glasse, with oyle burning in them all the night; some hung out branches of iron curiously wrought, containing hundreds of lamps lighted at once, which made a goodly shew, namely in Fish-street, Thames-street, &c.

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Then had ye besides the standing watches, all in bright harnesse, in every ward and street of this city and suburbs, a marching watch, that passed through the principal streets thereof, to wit, from the little conduit by Paul's gate, through West-chepe, by the stocks, through Corn-hill, by Leaden-hall to Aldgate, then back down Fen church Street, by Grasse church, about Grasse church Conduit, and up Grasse church Street into Corn-hill, and through it into West chepe again, and so broke up. The whole way ordered for this marching watch extended to three thousand two hundred taylor's yards of assize, for the furniture whereof with lights, there were appointed seven hundred cressets, five hundred of them being found by the companies, the other two hundred by the chamber of London. Besides the which lights, every constable in London, in number more than two hundred and forty, had his cresset. The charge for every cresset was in light two shillings and fourpence, and every cresset had two men, one to beare or hold it, another to beare a bag with light and to serve it: so that the poore men pertaining to the cressets, taking wages, besides that every one had a strawen hat, with a badge painted, and his breakfast in the morning, amounted in number to almost two thousand. The marching watch contained two thousand men, part of them being old souldiers of skill, to bee captaines, lieutenants, sergeants, corporals, &c. withers, drummers, and fifes, standard, and ensign bearers, sword-players, trumpeters, on horse-back, demi-launces on greate horses, gunners with hand guns, or halfe-hakes, archers in coats of white fustian, signed on

the brest and backe with the arms of the city, their bowes bent in their hands, with sheefes of arrowes by their sides, pikemen in bright corslets, burganets, &c. Holbards the like, billmen in almaine rivets, and aprons of mail in great numbers.

"There were also divers pageants, morris dancers, constables, the one halfe which was an hundred and twenty on Saint John's eve, and the other halfe on Saint Peter's eve, in bright harnesse, some overgilt, and every one a fornet of scarlet thereupon, and a chain of gold, his henchman following him, his minstrels before him, all in a livery of worsted or say jackets, party coloured, the maior himselfe well mounted on horse-backe, the sword-bearer before him in faire armour, well mounted also, the maior's footmen, and the like torch bearers about him, henchmen twain, upon great stirring horses following him. The sheriffes watches came one after the other in like order, but not so large in number as the maior's: for where the maior had besides his giant three pageants, each of the sheriffes had besides their giants but two pageants; each their morris dance, and one henchman, their officers in jackets of worsted, or say, party coloured, differing from the maiors, and each from other, but having harnessed men a great many. This Midsummer watch was thus accustomed yearly, time out of mind, until the year 1539." At which period we are informed that the citizens, in order to please their magnificent monarch, Henry VIII. so far surpassed the ancient pomp and pageanty, that the king "considering the great charges" of so costly a cavalcade, after the muster had been made on the eighth of May, for-

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bade the procession, and though there were several subsequent attempts to revive the old custom of the watch they were unsuccessful.

"In the month of August," says Stow, continuing his account of the amusements of the metropolis, "about the feast of Saint Bartholomew, the Apostle, before the Lord Maior, Aldermen, and Sheriffes of London, placed in a large tent, neare unto Clerkenwell, of old time were divers days spent in the pastime of wrestling, where the officers of the city, namely the sheriffes, sergeants, and yeomen, the porters of the king's beame, or weigh house (now no such men), and other of the city were challengers of all men in the suburbs, to wrestle for games appointed. And on other days before the said maior, aldermen, and sheriffes, in Finsbury field, to shoot the standard, broad arrow, and flight, for games. But now of late yeares the wrestling is only practised on Saint Bartholomew's Day, in the afternoon, and the shooting some three or four dayes after in one afternoon and no more. What should I speak of the ancient daily exercises in the long bow by citizens of this city, now almost cleane left off and forsaken, I over passe it: for by the meanes of closing in of common grounds, our archers for want of room to shoot abroad, creepe into bowling-alleys, and ordinarie dicing-houses, nearer home, where they have roome enough to hazard their unlawful games, and there I leave them to take their pleasures." Another old writer like Stow deeply lamenting the degeneracy of his contemporaries, and making comparisons much to their disadvantage, between their amusements and the

more manly exercises of the warlike spirits of Henry VI. and Edward IV. exclaims while uttering a bitter condemnation of the bowling-alleys, "Oh, what a wonderful change is this! our wrestling at armes is turned to wallowing in ladies laps, our courage to cowardice, our running to royot, our bowes into bowles, and our darts into dishes."*

The love of gaming which pervaded all ages, is manifested by the numerous statutes prohibiting the indulgence of so ruinous a vice; the common people preferred these popular games to the employment of their leisure hours, to the practice of archery, and the government with a view to suppress new and mischievous innovations, and to revive the emulation so useful in preparing soldiers for the field, in the reign of Edward IV. published the following ordinance. "Though by the laws of this land, no man shall play at unlawful games, as coits, footballs, and the like games, but that every able bodied man shall daily practice archery, because the defence of the kingdom depends on archers; yet notwithstanding these laws, many evil disposed persons, of all ranks, play at those and at other newly invented games, called cloits, kayles, half-bowl, handin-handout, and quecche borde."

The passion for strange sights which still prevails had a very early origin in England; its continental neighbours also participated in the thirst for all that was extraordinary and uncommon. Monstrelet tells us, in his chronicle, of a mis-shapen monster, who traversed various countries, and made large sums of money by the exhibition of horrible deformities.

* Stephen Gosson.

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Shakespeare's satires upon the love of the marvellous evinced in his own times, would have applied to a much earlier period. Long before the production of his exquisite drama, there were numbers of holiday fools in England who would have given a piece of silver to see the painting of that strange fish, Caliban. In the Paston Letters there is an account of a Turkish dwarf, forty years old, not taller than the children of the describer, by whose vague manner of writing, his stature in these days cannot be ascertained, and this pigmy was considered a spectacle worthy of the curiosity of a monarch; he was brought to court, and presented to Edward IV., and after the interview, told the by-standers that he "hadde chyldren as hyghe and as lykely as the kyng hymselfe."

CHAPTER VIII.

Splendour of Household Furniture—of Dress and Ornaments—Extracts from various Wills—Weight of the Gold Chains—Offerings at Funerals—Dwellings of the Rich and of the Poor—Harrison's Account of the Manner of Building—Poverty of the Lower Classes—Hospitality of the Nobles—Neglect of Agriculture—State of Society—Feud between the Talbots and the Berkeleys—Battle at Nibly Green—Brutality of the Conqueror—Brawl between Edward's Servants and the City Watch—Indignity offered to the Lord Mayor—Aggressions of the Nobles—Treatment of Prisoners of War—An unnatural Son—Character of Lord Rivers—Printing established in England—Ignorance of the Age—Introduction of new offensive Weapons—Statutes for the Encouragement of Archery—Archers and Men-at-Arms—The Cross-bow—The Hand Cannon—Improvements in Fire Arms—Anecdote respecting Hungary Water—Different ancient warlike Implements—Inscriptions upon Swords—and upon Spurs—Architecture of the Fifteenth Century—Devastation occasioned by the Civil Wars—Price of Roses and Apples in the Time of Henry VII.—Monumental Remains—Blazoning of Arms—Badges of the House of York—and of the House of Lancaster—The Fox's Tail—Anecdotes concerning it—Cognizance of the Feather—Badges preserved on the Signs of Inns—Richard's White Boar—The Bear and the Ragged Staff—Oxford's Star—Origin of Supporters—Introduction of the Blazon of Arms by Richard I.—Coinage of England—Changes under different Monarchs—Improvements made by Henry VII.—Edward's Deference to the Church—Increase of Abuses—Feud between the different Orders of Friars—Fashionable Places of Burial—Edward's Religion—Infliction of Torture—Its Condemnation by Sir John Fortesque—Persecution of Sir Thomas Cooke—Infractions of

the Law—Number of Law Students—Opinion of Sir Matthew Hale—Privileges obtained by the House of Commons—Canvas of a Candidate for a Borough—Wages of the Members—Short Sessions—Rowlie's Poems—Hardynge's Poems—Origin of the Poet Laureate—Claim of Lord Rivers to a Place amid the Authors of Edward's Reign—his Preface—Poem of Lord Rivers—Dame Juliana Berners.

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THE household furniture and the dress of the nobility of this period was exceedingly magnificent, and both were made the subject of testamentary bequests.* Robes of state were composed of satin, velvet and cloth of gold, lined with costly furs and broidered with gems and goldsmith's work. The ladies wore their hair plaited with jewels, from which pendant drops, composed of precious stones of great value and size, hung upon their foreheads; their necklaces, chains, bracelets, and rosaries, were also extremely rich and beautiful, as we learn from the wills of the times. Elizabeth Lady Fitzhugh, in 1427, bequeathed to one of her daughters a chaplet of pearl with double roses, and to another a tyre with double roses of pearl. Eleanor Countess of Arundel, in 1455 gives to the Lady Eleanor Percy, her daughter, a "golden collar for her neck, with a jewel set with precious stones hanging thereat." We read likewise of "a gold ring set with a turquoise, a diamond and a ruby;" "a broche with a blue sapphire set in it shaped like a flower de luce," "a rich rose of diamonds and rubies," a "cheyne of gold with a cross of diamonds and pearls," with an infinite variety of other costly and elegant ornaments. Plate in immense abundance is continually men-

* Testamenta Vetusta.

tioned, consisting of silver basins and ewers, bowls, cruets, chargers, candlesticks and cups; spoons, goblets, spice plates, flagons and saltcellars, many of which are described as being curiously enamelled, or embellished with fine chased work. Sir Thomas Lyttleton, the celebrated judge and author, enumerates amid the bequests of his will a basin of silver bearing his arms in the midst, a silver ewer, "two great salt selers and a kover," weighing ninety-three ounces and a half, "a standing plaine gilt piece with a plaine gilt kover, weying twenty-four ounces and a half," six bowls of silver enamelled, a standing piece with kover, weying nineteen ounces and a half, "two pieces of silver, one covering another, a powder box of silver, a paxe borde, two cruetts and a sakering bell, all of silver." These are legacies to the testator's wife. The knight gives to his son and heir "a depe washing basin of silver weighing forty-one ounces, two salt selers of silver with a kover to oon of them weying thirty-one ounces and a half, with another piece all over gilt, in the midst of which be three eagles; also a lowe piece of silver with a kover embossed in the likeness of roses, weying twenty-nine ounces and a half, with a dozen of his best spoons." To his son Richard the knight bequeaths "two little gilt saltselers with a gilt kover to oon, one little standing piece with a gilt kover which hath at the foote a crown and another on the kover weighing twenty-two ounces; also a standyng gilt nutt," and the best dozen of the second sort of his spoons. To Thomas Littleton, another son, "two salt selers of silver weying twenty-seven ounces," a standing piece gilt, with the family arms in the midst,

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"a boll of siluer embossed with round bosses outward, weying eleven ounces and three quarters," with a dozen spoons of the third sort, and a little flat piece of silver all over gilt. To Edward Littleton, the testator's godson, "a little standing goblet of silver with a kover to the same all over gilt," and to the chapel of Frambley a gilt chalice.

The tapestry hangings which covered the walls of the reception rooms in the houses of the nobility, were often of great value and very exquisite workmanship. Anne Duchess of Buckingham bequeaths the hangings of the chamber of antelopes to her son. There are others mentioned, worked with armorial bearings; and a set in the will of Thomas Howard, the second Duke of Norfolk, is described as containing the story of Hercules. Nothing could exceed the gorgeousness of the beds. We read of the curtains and other coverings being composed of the most superb materials and enriched with curious needlework. The princess Joan left to her son Richard II. a new bed of red velvet embroidered in ostrich feathers and leopards' heads of gold; and to the Earl of Kent, another of red camak paled with red and rays of gold. Joan Beauchamp, lady of Bergavenny, was possessed of beds canopied with cloth of gold wrought with leopards, and of black and red silk embroidered with woodbine flowers of silver. Coverlets were furred with minever and worked in various devices and coats of arms. Amid the bequests of John of Ghent are a large bed of black velvet embroidered with fetterlocks and garters, a piece of arras, a present from the Duke of Burgundy, a chain of gold, which was even then an

antique, being "after the old manner with the name of God in each part," a present to the duke from his mother Queen Philippa, consort of Edward III., a bed of blue silk with eagles displayed, and a silk bed to his grandson Henry V. There are also rings, collars, diamonds, rubies, and a vast number of articles of gold and silver plate.

An instance occurs in the wills of this period of the intailing a bed of estate.* Ralph, Lord Basset, 1389, bequeaths the use of his great velvet bed for life to the person who shall first bear his arms. A red bed embroidered with lions, and a bed of Norwich stuff wrought with butterflies are mentioned in the will of Sir John Cobham, 1394. John Duke of Exeter, 1447, leaves a white bed with poppinjays to his daughter Anne; a bed covered with ermine, a bed of silk of black and green colour, a bed of red silk, another of blue silk, and a bed of white velvet are also expressly named as legacies in different wills. Amid the dresses and robes of state are an entire suit of vestments of velvet chequered, a suit of vestments of green cloth of gold, a whole suit of red vestments of cloth of gold, the property of Agnes Hastings Countess of Pembroke. Robert Earl of Suffolk, 1368, bequeaths his summer vestments, powdered with leopards, to his eldest son. Joane Lady Hungerford gives to her daughter-in-law a black mantle furred with minever, and the Lady Elizabeth Andrews enumerates a blue gown furred with white, a crimson gown single, and a fur of grey, and a single gown of velvet and fur of white to be divided between her daughters. Rich garments were frequently

* Testamenta Vetusta, vol. i.

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given in their wills by the pious to religious institutions; in some instances for the decoration of a particular saint, in others for the use of the officiating priests. We find a vestment of black, adorned with stars of gold, also certain copes and other things thereunto appertaining given to the church of St. John at Brackley in the county of Northampton. A gown of green cloth of gold with wide sleeves to our lady of Walsingham, and the wedding gown of the testator and all her clothes of gold and clothes of silk, excepting one of russet velvet bequeathed to St. Winifred, to the Abbey of Tewkesbury. By this curious will we may form some idea of the great weight and value of the gold chain, so highly esteemed as the ornament of a gala dress; the pious donor, Isabel Countess of Warwick, directs that a crown of gold, weighing twenty-five pounds, made of her gold chain and other broken gold in her cabinet, shall be offered to our lady at Caversham. "In the reign of Henry VIII.," we are told by Mr. Nicolas,* "the fashion of gold chains was carried to a most sumptuous excess, and their weight in gold was so great as to be positively inconvenient." One presented by the king to Sir Thomas Pain, and estimated in the knight's will at the value of one hundred and forty pounds, we learn from the same authority, "weighed, allowing for the workmanship, more than two pounds troy."

William Lord Hungerford, 1449, gave to the cathedral church at Bath, "one whole suit of vestments, with all things appertaining thereto, for a priest,

* See the Notes to the Testamenta Vetusta, which contain much interesting and valuable information.

deacon, and sub-deacon; likewise a cope of black and red velvet embroidered like waves, two copes of damask with gold of the same colour and work;" and he desires that his arms may be wrought "in the said vestments for greater notice." Sir John Nevill, 1449, gives a gown of blue cloth of gold, a doublet of the same; a gown of black velvet, and all his doublets of velvet to make vestments for the priests belonging to that church wherein his bones shall repose: he also desires that a courser may be offered at his funeral. William Lord Morley wills, that two of his best horses should be disposed of for mortuaries; his best black horse to the Augustine friars at Norwich on the day of his burial, and his palfrey called Don, to the rector at the church of Halingsbury. It was a usual thing to offer a charger fully trapped and caparisoned, and splendid pieces of offensive and defensive armour at the obsequies of a noble or knight; these were redeemable at the pleasure of the surviving relatives of the deceased.* Reliques set in gold and enriched with jewels, missals, psalters and primmers, superbly illuminated, bound in velvet and silk, clasped with gold and ornamented with precious stones, are frequently described in the wills of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. The Bedford missal, a present from Jacqueline Duchess of Bedford to her nephew Henry VI., is still in existence, and is esteemed one of the most magnificent specimens of the stately volumes. Amid its embellishments is an illumination representing Henry V. being armed by his esquires; the King appears in a suit of gilt armour.

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* Testamenta Vetusta.

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The walls of the apartments in the palaces of the great were hung with rich tapestry, and an infinity of labour was bestowed upon the fine tracery of the carved oak round the pannelled wainscots, which formed a conspicuous ornament in the houses of nobles: but this splendour did not extend to the floor, which except upon very especial occasions, or in the habitations of those accustomed to foreign luxuries, only boasted a covering of rushes, while every thing like elegance in domestic life was exclusively confined to the higher orders. Walpole has justly observed, that in the middle ages there was no medium between castles and hovels; and in the description of England given by Harrison,* a very correct idea may be obtained of the style of living in the fifteenth century. "In old times," says our author, "the houses of the Britons were slightly set up with a few posts, with stable and all offices under one roof, the like whereof almost is to be seen in the fennie countries and northern parts to this daie, where for lacke of wood they are inforced to continue the ancient mode of building. It is not in vaine therefore in speaking of building to make a distinction between the plain and woody soiles; for as in these our houses are commonly strong and well timbered, so that in many places there are not above four, six, or nine inches between stud and stud; so in the open champagne countries they are inforced for want of stuff to use no studs at all, but only franke posts, raisins, beames, pricke posts, groundsels, summers, and such principals, with here and there girding where unto they fasten their splints or sadels,

* Holinshed's Chronicles, vol. i.

and then cast it all over with thick claie to keep out the wind, which otherwise would anoie them. Certes this rude kind of building made the Spaniards in Queen Marie's daies, to wonder, but cheeflie when they saw what large diet was used in many of these so homlie cottages, insomuch that one of no small reputation amongst them, said after this manner: 'These English,' quoth he, 'have their houses made of sticks and dust, but they fare commonly as well as the king.' Whereby it appeared that he liked better of our good fare in such course cabins, than of their own thin diet in their princely palaces. In like sort as everie countrie house is thus appareled on the outside, so it is inwardly divided into sundrie rooms above and beneath; and where plentie of wood is, they cover them with tiles, otherwise with straw. The walls of our houses on the inner side be either hanged with tapistrie, arras work, or painted cloths, wherein either diverse histories, or hearbes, beasts, knots, and such like are stained, or else they are scaled with oke of our own, or wainscot brought hither out of the east countries, whereby the rooms are not a little commended, made warm, and much more close than they otherwise would be. As for stoves, we have not hitherto used them greatly, yet they now begin to be made in diverse houses of the gentrie and wealthy citizens.

"This also hath been common in England, contrary to the custom of all other nations, and yet to be seene for example in most streets of London, that many of our great houses have outwardlie been very simple and plaine to syght, which inwardlie have been able to receive a duke with his whole train

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and lodge them at their ease. Hereby moreover it is come to passe that the fronts of our streets have not been so uniform and orderlie builded as those of forreine cities, where, to saie truth, the outside of their mansions and dwellings have oft more cost bestowed upon them than all the rest of the house, which are often verie simple and uneasie within, as experience doth confirm. Of old time our countrie houses, instead of glasse, did use much lattice-work, and that made either of wicker or of fine riffs of oke in cheker-wise. I read also that some of the better sort, in and before the time of the Saxons, who notwithstanding used some glasse, also since the time of Benedict Biscop, the monke that brought the feat of glasse first into this land, did make panels of horn instead of glasse, and fit them in wooden calmes. But as horn in windows is now quite laid downe in everie place, so our lattices are also grown into less use, bicause glasse is come to be so plentiful, within a verie little so good cheepe if not better than the other. The ancient manours and houses of our gentlemen are yet and for the most part of strong timber, in framing whereof our carpenters have been, and are worthilie preferred before those of like science in all other nations."

The description given by Harrison relative to the construction of houses, is corroborated by that of Strutt,* who informs us that, "from the reign of King Edward I. to that of James I., the common run of houses, especially among the middling sort of people, were built with wood. They generally made large porches before their principal entrances, with great halls and large parlours; the frame-work was con-

* Manners and Customs.

structed of beams of timber, of such enormous size that the materials of one house as they built it anciently would make several of equal size according to the present mode of building. The common method of making walls was to nail laths to the timber frame, and sticke them over with a rough plaster, which was afterwards whitened and ornamented with fine mortar, and this last was often beautified with figures and other curious devices. The houses in the cities and towns were certainly built, each story jetting forth over the former story, so that when the streets were not very wide the people at the top from opposite houses, might not only talk and converse with each other, but even shake hands together. Their houses were covered with tiles, shingles, slate, or lead, except in the city of London, where shingles were forbid."

The discomfort, privation, and misery endured by the lower orders in England, who appear until after the reign of Elizabeth to have been very scantily supplied with even the commonest necessaries of life, is manifested by the flourishing detail which Harrison gives of the wealth and splendour of his own time. "The furniture of our houses exceedeth," observes this writer, "and luxuries are not as formerly confined to the mansions of the rich. There are old men yet dwelling in the village where I remain, which hath noted three things to be marvellously altered in England within their sound remembrance. One is the multitude of chimneys lately erected; whereas in their young daies there were not above two or three, if so manie, in most uplandish townes of the realm, religious houses and

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manour places of their lords alwaies excepted, and peradventure some great personage, but eche one made his fire in the hall where he dined and dressed his meat. The second is the great although not general amendment in lodging; for, said they, our fathers, yea and we ourselves also, have lien full oft upon straw pallets or rough mats covered over with a sheet, under coverlets of dog's waine, and a good round log under their heads instead of a bolster or pillow. If it were so that our fathers, or the goode man of the house, had within seven yeares after his marriage purchased a matteres or flocke bed, and thereto a sacke of chaffe to rest his head upon, he thought himself to be as well lodged as the lorde of the towne, that peradventure lay seldom in a bed of downe or whole feathers; so well were they contented and with such base kind of furniture, which also is not very much amended as yet in some parts of Bedfordshire, and elsewhere further off from our southern parts. As for servants, if they had anie sheet above them it was well, for seldom had they anie under their bodies to keep them from the pricking straws that ran through the canvas of their pallets. The third thing they tell of is the exchange of vessels, as of treene platters into pewter, and woodden spoons into silver or tin; for so common were all sorts of treene (wooden) stuffe in old time, that a man should hardlie find four pieces of pewter (of which one was peradventure a salt) in a good farmer's house; and yet for all this frugalitie (if it may be so justly called) they were scarce able to live and pay their rents at their daies without selling a cow or a horse, or more, although they paid but

foure pounds at the uttermost by the yeare. Such also was their povertie, that if some one od farmer or husbandman, had been at the alehouse, a thing greatly used in those daies, amongst six or seven of his neighbours, and there in a braverie to shew what store he had, did cast downe his purse, and therein a noble or six shillings in silver, unto them, for few such men then cared for gold, bicause it was not so ready payment, and they were oft inforced to give a pennie for the exchange of an angell, it was verie likely that all the rest would not laie down so much against it; whereas in my time, although peradventure four pounds of old rent be improved to fortie, fiftie, or an hundred pounds, yet will the farmer think his gaines verie small towards the ende of his tearme, if he have not six or seven years rent lying by him therewith to purchase a new lease, besides a faire garnish of pewter on his cupboard, with so much more in od vessels going about the house, three or four feather beds, so manie coverlids and carpets of tapistry, a silver salt, a bowle for wine, and a dozen of spoones to furnish up the sute." CHAP. VIII.

While a large portion of the community were plunged into hopeless and squalid poverty, the nobles lived in the most princely manner. The dependents and retainers of great men were entertained at the expence of their lords, dining generally in the same apartment, and not unfrequently at the same table below the salt, which condiment being placed on the centre of the board in a gold or silver vase, pointed out the line of demarcation between the high and low, and presented a boundary which no mean person dared overstep.

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"The fragments of the abundant banquets served up to a great lord and his household, were afterwards distributed to the poor who thronged in multitudes round the doors of potent nobles. The number of applicants may be imagined from the account given by Stow of the degeneracy of a later age. "I have often seen," says he, "in that declining time of charity, at the Lord Cromwell's gate at London, two hundred persons served every day with bread, meat and drink sufficient." Pecuniary gifts often accompanied this supply of provisions; for we learn from the same writer, that the government being hardly pressed for money during the civil wars, was obliged to send a valuable alms dish, belonging to the Duke of Gloucester, to some of their partizans, who for the time were indebted to the sale of the royal plate for their support. "I read," says Stow, "in the year 1452, that Richard Duke of York, then claiming the crown, the Lord Rivers should have passed the sea about the king's business; but staying at Plymouth till his money was spent, and then sending for more, the Duke of Somerset sent him the image of St. George in silver and gold to be sold, with the alms dish of the Duke of Gloucester, which was also of great price, for coin had they none."

The immense expenditure which this princely mode of living must have occasioned, accounts for the greedy avarice of nobles, who were compelled to support the dignity of their descent, by a suitable establishment, and whose pride and ostentation incited them to vie with each other in the number of their retainers and the splendour of their trappings. Ignorant of the method of improving their estates

they were wholly bent upon making new acquisitions of land, and reckless by what means, entrenched upon the property of weaker men without scruple or shame, whenever an opportunity occurred of aggrandizing themselves at the expence of their neighbours. Agricultural pursuits were beneath the notice of great lords, and they hunted over vast tracts of country wilfully abandoned to desolation, which if cleared, drained, and cultivated, would have doubled the amount of their annual incomes. But in addition to the pleasures derived from the chace they were in some degree dependent upon it for the delicacies of the table. During the winter season they were condemned to subsist chiefly upon salt provisions, the farmers not having yet discovered the means of maintaining the summer stock of cattle throughout the year, and we can scarcely in these days estimate the luxury of venison, or be surprised at the jealous care with which the forest laws secured it to a proud, pampered and unfeeling nobility.

Edward IV. was not inattentive to the welfare of society in the administration of justice; he is said to have sate two days in the Court of King's Bench at Westminster, judging the cause of a widow. Yet during the stormy periods of his reign* many lamentable instances of robbery and wrong occurred, perpetrated by men whose outrages in consequence of the unsettled state of the public affairs or the triumph of their own party remained unnoticed and unpunished. The barbarous detail of private feuds which stain the annals of England during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, afford abundant proof of the lawless rapa-

* Hall.

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city and contentious spirit of the nobles. A fierce war was carried on between the Berkeleys and their antagonists the Beauchamps and the Talbots, which lasted for the space of one hundred and ninety-two years, and was pursued with unparalleled animosity for the greater part of the time. The ancient seat of the Berkeleys, memorable in history as the scene of Edward II.'s murder, and described by Dugdale as a "fair castle on the banks of the Severn in the marches of Wales," was disputed by the heir male of the family, and the daughter of Thomas Lord Berkeley deceased, in the fifth year of Henry V. We are told that the Earl of Warwick, who married the lady, being present at the death-bed of her father, carried off the title-deeds of the estate, which prevented Lord James the nephew from establishing his right, but resolved to defend his inheritance he entrenched himself in the castle to which his potent adversary laid regular siege. Lord James vigorously repelled the attack, and many persons were "hurt and slain" on both sides in the rancorous contest. Upon the decease of the Countess of Warwick her claim descended to her daughter the wife of the earl of Shrewsbury, who, according to Gough and other writers, was a personage of masculine spirit, well fitted for the age in which she flourished. Seizing upon the whole of the property, she confined Lord James in the tower of his own fortress, sent his two younger sons James and Thomas out of the kingdom, and imprisoned his wife, a daughter of Mowbray Duke of Norfolk, in Gloucester Castle. She bequeathed her pretensions and her turbulent spirit to her grandson Thomas Talbot, Viscount Lisle; but

in the interim William Lord Berkeley, a descendant of James, had contrived to re-establish himself in the castle, while the adjoining manor of Wootton, likewise his inheritance, was in the possession of his rival, who lived upon it in open defiance of law and justice. The near neighbourhood of these incensed disputants could not fail to produce a renewal of hostilities; after an angry correspondence they agreed to decide their quarrel by the sword, and appointing a meeting upon Nibly Green, encountered each other at the head of a thousand followers; a hundred and fifty of the combatants perished on the spot, and Lord Lisle, shot in the neck by an archer from the Forest of Dean, lost life and land in this disgraceful broil.*

The conqueror, sharing in the brutal ferocity of the time, rushed forward from the bloody field to Wootton, surrounded the mansion of his fallen enemy and plundered it of its richest ornaments. The bride of the slaughtered Lisle, overwhelmed with grief and alarm by the fatal termination of this murderous strife, and the hostile invasion of a victorious and merciless foe, gave untimely birth to the first pledge of connubial affection, an infant destined never to behold the light, and became childless and a widow in the same day. This atrocious act of riot and bloodshed was suffered to pass unpunished in the perilous situation of the government which followed the rebellion of Clarence and Warwick. Lord Berkeley was a partizan of the red rose, a circumstance which would have shielded him from retributive justice, even if Henry's ministers had been sufficiently established to attend to the redress of

* Leland.

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private grievances, and upon the restoration of Edward, the outrage was probably forgotten or overlooked in the pressure of more important affairs. Even the presence of royalty, and the obligation of office, failed to check the insolent licentiousness of men, who, though appointed to be the guardians of the peace, frequently disturbed the public tranquillity by their brawls, and upon one occasion are recorded to have offended under the very eye of the king.* A chronicle of London states, that in 1473, according to the customary muster of the city guard on particular days, before-mentioned, "there was a greate watch upon Saint Peter's nyght, the kyng being in the Chepe, and there fell affray betwixt men of his household and constables, wherefore the kyng was greatly displeased with the constables." In the same record we find another and a more amusing anecdote of Edward's reign, which is also noticed by several of the old historians. "In this year," says the Chronicle, 1764, "was the sergeant's fest, and the Maire of London shuld have dyned there; and because the chief place was not kepte for him while the kyng was not there nor of his blode, he came away with all his compaigny of this cite, and dined at home in his own place."

We learn from Baker, that the banquet was prepared at Michaelmas, at the Bishop of Ely's palace in Holborn, to celebrate the creation of eight serjeants-at-law; and that the possession of the post of honour by Lord Grey, of Ruthyn, Lord Treasurer of England, gave such umbrage to the Lord Mayor, that he departed hastily, with the aldermen and sheriffs, without even tasting the viands; a sacri-

* Harleian MSS. No. 565.

fice to dignity of the civic predilection for dainty fare, equally singular and heroic. Baker also tells us that this magnanimous choice on the part of the Lord Mayor was registered for a precedent.

To Fenn's collection of original letters record various excesses committed by the nobility, and the necessity of purchasing the protection of one great lord against the aggressions of another. The Pastons are at one time advised to bribe the Duke of Norfolk with "the profits of Hellesdon Drayton, and some money beside," to induce him to interfere in their behalf, when attacked by three hundred of the Duke of Suffolk's retainers;* and at the siege of Caister, by the Duke of Norfolk, Margaret Paston entreats her son to obtain Lord Oxford's assistance, "even though he should have the place during his life for his labour."†

We cannot open a chronicle belonging to this period without meeting with some striking instance of its barbarism in every page, and murder is invested with new horrors by the contempt and indifference of the perpetrators to the waste of human blood.

The commander of a fleet writes coolly of drowning or slaying his prisoners of war, unless he shall receive contrary orders from the king's council:‡ and John Brome, a lawyer, assassinated in the porch of a church, by the steward of Richard Nevill, with his dying breath declared that he forgave his son Thomas, "who smiled when he saw him run through the body."§ Such are the dark pictures presented during the era of the civil wars, wherein

* Fenn's Collection, vol. iv. p. 216. † Vol. iv. p. 384.
‡ Fenn's Collection. § Dugdale.

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the naturally savage tempers of men, not yet refined by civilization, were brutalized by the inveteracy, malignity, the cruelty, and the revenge, which are the never failing characteristics of domestic quarrels, where private malice is always superadded to the wild zeal of infuriated partizans, where every generous feeling is quenched in the desire to exterminate an opposing faction, and the axe of the executioner is the dismal attendant upon the warrior's triumphant sword.

The imagination, sickening with the accumulated horrors of this frightful period, turns with delight to the contemplation of a splendid individual, who like a solitary star upon the brow of night, illumines the dreary record of woe and crime. Lord Rivers, the brightest ornament of the age which gave him birth, combined in his person and character every accomplishment and every attraction which could add lustre to a knight and a gentleman. Chivalry still retained a firm supporter in this valiant and courtly nobleman, who yielded to none of his most renowned predecessors in feats of arms and deeds of martial heroism. A learned antiquary* observes of him, that he was "as gallant as his luxurious brother-in-law, without his weaknesses, as brave as the heroes of either rose, without their savageness, studious in the intervals of business, and devout after the manner of those whimsical times, when men challenged each other whom they never saw, and went barefoot to visit shrines in countries of which they had scarce a map."

Distinguished as a statesman and a warrior, Lord

* Walpole's Noble Authors.

Rivers fought by Edward's side, and was entrusted with several important embassies at the courts of Scotland, Burgundy, and Bretagne, and being smitten with the desire to view foreign countries, employed his leisure in travelling through Spain and Italy; his pilgrimage to the altar of St. James of Compostella, is mentioned in the preface attached to one of his works, and we hear in the Paston Letters of a robbery which deprived him of much valuable property in the vicinity of Rome. His piety and liberality induced him to purchase a large indulgence from the holy see, for the chapel of our lady of Pisa, near St. Stephen's Westminster, which is recorded to his honour by Caxton. If not equal in learning, yet far superior in the admirable qualities of the heart to his accomplished contemporary the famous Earl of Worcester, he enriched the literature of England by original poetry and translations from the writings of the ancients. Profound and sincere in his devotion to the fair sex, with the truest spirit of gallantry, he omitted the sarcasm of Socrates against women, in his version of the Dictes and Sayings of the Philosophers. Amiable throughout his life, unspoiled by prosperity, and uncontaminated by the example of a licentious court, he shrank not from the tempest which frowned upon a darker hour, and after an existence marked by numerous vicissitudes, sometimes hunted into exile, and exposed to contumely and insult, at others basking in royal favour, and emboldened to solicit the hands of princesses in marriage, he met his death with heroic fortitude. All his actions correspond with the noble and pious sentiments which

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have enabled a future age to do justice to his various merits, and never did the tyrant Richard cause purer and nobler blood to flow than that which dyed the scaffold when the virtuous Rivers fell.

The age of Edward IV. was remarkable for the introduction of the art of printing in England. It was brought from the continent by William Caxton, a man of considerable learning and genius, attached to the train of the Princess Margaret, and employed by her royal brother to negotiate a treaty of commerce with the Duke of Burgundy. Caxton was patronized by the Earl of Worcester, the Earl of Rivers, Lord Hastings, and all the lovers of literature. Upon his return to England in 1473, encouraged by the Abbot of Westminster, he established a press in the almonry of the abbey, whence he published a small book entitled "The Game of Chess," which he had himself translated from the French, and he was afterwards frequently employed by the noblemen about Edward's court in giving English versions of popular continental works:* we hear of his translation of a book for the Lord Hastings, intended as a present to a man "of great worship" in the city, and though he commenced his new employment at rather an advanced age, he printed and published about fifty books, some of them large volumes, and many, either original or translated, the production of his own pen.*

Notwithstanding the arrival of several foreigners, who even previous to Caxton's death established themselves as printers in England, a long period elapsed before literature sustained any material be-

* Ames.

nefit from the newly-discovered art. During the succeeding reigns learning sunk to a very low ebb, and it was not until its drooping interests were revived by Henry VIII. and Cardinal Wolsey, that the higher classes considered an acquaintance with books to be a necessary acquirement. The speech of a person of quality has been preserved in the Biographia Britannica, which manifests the slight esteem in which the sciences were held even at a much later period. "It is enough," said he to the king's secretary, "for noblemen's sons to wind their horn and carry their hawk fair, and leave study and learning to the children of mean people."

Although the chief strength of the English army still consisted in its archers, which excelled those of every other nation, and were the great instruments of their victories over their French and Scottish enemies, military men were daily becoming better acquainted with the use and management of gunpowder, and Edward IV., the most skilful commander of his age, derived infinite advantage from his field pieces. In the battle which he fought against Sir Robert Welles, these destructive engines performed eminent service, mowing down whole ranks of the rebels, who fled dismayed from the deadly havoc and accumulated horrors of a field darkened with clouds of smoke, and reverberating with the thunders of the deep-mouthed gun; and in the progressive improvement of fire-arms, archery fell gradually into disuse.

In the fifteenth century this noble art was however pursued with great avidity, both for a warlike purpose and as a dexterous sport; the lower orders

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were repeatedly commanded to recreate themselves with bows and arrows in an age when standing armies were not known, and the monarch depended upon sudden levies of the retainers of great men, who if not already disciplined for the field would have been very nearly useless. We are told, that "as far back as the thirteenth century, every person not having a greater annual revenue in land than one hundred pence, was obliged to have in his possession a bow and arrows, with other arms offensive and defensive; and all such as had no possessions but could afford to purchase arms, were commanded to have a bow with sharp arrows, if they dwelt without the royal forests, and a bow with round-headed arrows if they resided within the forests."*

The ancient practice of planting yew trees in churchyards is supposed to have originated in the necessity of obtaining a constant supply of the tough material for the bow; foreign yew was preferred in the construction of these warlike implements, and bore a much higher price; and they were also sometimes made of Brazil elm and ash, and of other woods; but the yew was always considered to be the best adapted for the purpose. These simple yet terrific weapons when intended for war were usually the height of a man, and carried arrows of a yard length plumed with the goose wing, or not unfrequently with peacock's feathers.† The elegant

* Strutt.

† Fuller has preserved an ancient proverb, which shews how highly the bow was prized as an offensive weapon:

"England were but a fling—(cast away)—
But for the crooked stick and the grey goose wing."
Worthies.

equipment of the archers with their curved bows and graceful quivers, rendered them the most picturesque as well as the most efficient of the military array, and they afforded also a very striking contrast to the men-at-arms, covered with polished mail, and bearing the battle-axe, the broadsword and the lance: these splendid but unwieldy troops were frequently quiet spectators of a victory achieved entirely by the bowmen, their arrows sharp and strong, and discharged with unerring force, pierced through the steel armour of their assailants, and flying in thick showers through opposing ranks, every shaft came winged with death, the field was covered with the slain, and the survivors beholding their comrades transfixed by these murderous weapons, fled before the heavy cavalry could advance to share in the glories of the day.

* The cross bow was an expensive and a complicated weapon, the stringing being a work both of strength and time: this operation was performed by placing the left foot in a stirrup attached to the instrument, and winding up the string by means of a moulinet and pulleys constructed for the purpose, and which could be removed at pleasure: while preparing for action, the bowman was defended by a pavise, a large shield, held before him by an attendant, whose duty it was to ward off the missiles of the enemy. In consequence of the costliness of this weapon, it was often borne by the sons of knights, and the archer was accompanied by one of his father's retainers who carried the pavise. Hence in Spain, we are told by Dr. Meyrick, during the

* Meyrick.

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reign of its King James I., a cross-bowman was considered as on a level with a knight, "a distinction," observes our author, "in those days of great importance. An ordinance of the monarch is to this effect, 'We enact that no knight's son who is not a knight himself or a cross-bowman, shall sit at table with knights or their ladies.' "* In addition to the heavy pieces of ordnance which from the reign of Edward III. were employed upon the field of battle, attempts were continually made to bring fire-arms into more general use. The first of the kind which was rendered portable, and capable of being managed by a single person, was called a hand cannon, the invention of the people of Lucca in 1430, which, in the course of fifteen years became common in England. This engine was in every respect the epitome of its prototype, being nothing more than a simple metal tube, provided with a touch-hole, and mounted on a stock of wood: next followed the hand gun, in which the stock or frame, as it was then termed, was better formed, and the whole rendered more convenient. In the time of Edward IV. the arquebus, which was the hand gun with a lock to hold the match, was suggested by the cross-bow. Philip de Comines speaks of both being used at the same time, though the superior convenience of the arquebus, or the harquebus, very soon gave it pre-eminence of the hand gun. The Hungary water, still so famous, we are told, derived its name of arquebusade

* To Doctor Meyrick, whose ready kindness all those who have approached him have experienced, the author is indebted for a view and an explanation of the numerous fire-arms which enrich his son's magnificent collection of ancient armour.

from the prevailing opinion that it was "the sovereignest thing on earth" for gun-shot wounds. In consequence of the preference given to the match-lock, the hand gun fell into disuse; the former, though loaded with cumbrous machinery, was much more serviceable and effective. A long period elapsed before any superior contrivance was adopted, but in the interim the match-lock sustained many alterations, and it may be interesting to state, although the important discovery was not made until many years after the era which closes the present history, that the snap-lock, which superseded the use of matches, was the next invention; and, after an infinite variety of alterations and improvements, led to the fire-lock, the effective weapon of modern days. As these destructive engines grew into esteem, artists of first-rate talent were employed in their decorations, and the few that have survived the wasting progress of time, present very elegant specimens of the taste and industry of the period which produced them. The richness, delicacy and high finish of the carved and inlaid work of the ancient arquebus, form a striking contrast to the awkward clumsiness of the mechanical part, which was at once rude and elaborate. Previous to the discovery of gunpowder, and before the general adaptation of cannon to the assault of fortified places, invention was taxed in the manufacture of weapons both offensive and defensive, calculated to repel the besiegers from the ditches and towers, or to make breaches in the walls; some of the engines contained in the collections of ancient armour are equally curious and terrific; one in particular, called the morning star, must have been

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peculiarly effective; it was a globe of iron bristling with spikes, appended by a chain to a long wooden staff, and being swung rapidly round, made deadly havoc upon all within the circle of its orbit.

The ghastly butchery of a battle-field in which the combatants fought hand to hand suggests frightful images to the mind, and the horror of the mental picture is heightened when contemplating the cruel contrivances to render death more hideous.

Besides the archers and the men-at-arms, the armies of the middle ages were strengthened by companies of bill-men and pike-men, and vast numbers were furnished with battle-axes, glaives, and partisans.

The implements of husbandry suggested to men, accustomed to see whole bodies engaged in battle, who were taken from their native fields supplied only with the instruments employed in their daily labour, the formation of arms upon the same model. To the lance, the javelin, and the pike, originally military, were added the bill and the axe, as the equipments of a warrior. The glaive, a weapon shaped like the billhook, was made to cut the contrary way, and the gisarm, or bisarm, was a crooked blade mounted like the others on a long wooden staff, and furnished with a pike, which branched out near the base of the blade in an opposite direction, for the purpose of thrusting as well as of cutting. The partisan, a name familiar to all the readers of Shakspeare, was a broad-bladed weapon adapted for the defence of trenches, which however varied considerably in its form at different periods. The spetium, a species of the same engine, in which a narrower blade emerged from a crescent of steel, and which

was sometimes darted like a javelin; and the ranseur, or ronice, more complicated and murderous, being a pike from whence branched on either side a curved blade, bending downwards, and sharpened on the inside, which was employed in cutting down those unfortunate persons whom the wielder could enclose within these deadly half circles, were subsequently merged in the partisan. The halberd, formed of the pike, the bill, and the axe, an effective and ornamental weapon, first came into fashion in the reign of Henry VII., and afterwards grew into so much esteem as to give its name to a whole regiment, called from their arms, the "Halberdiers." The pike was employed in the thrust, the bill in cutting, and the axe in hewing down the enemy, according to the circumstances in which the bearer of this terrific engine was placed. The appellation is still retained, but the instrument itself is now scarcely useful except as the insignia of rank, marking the serjeant from the private soldier: somewhat of the form also remains, but stripped of its gigantic proportions, and now only glittering in vain show over the bristling ranks of the bayonet. The two-handed sword, a tremendous weapon, came into fashion about the latter end of the reign of Henry V.; it was wielded by both arms, and admirably calculated for the extraordinary achievements of the doughty heroes of that day.

The similarity of the shape between the crucifix and the sword, the hilt of the latter forming a cross, occasioned the application of that weapon to a purpose very different from its original designation: it was frequently presented to persons stretched upon

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the battle field in the agonies of death, when the last rites of the Roman Catholic church could be even thus hastily administered. It was also customary to swear upon the sword, as the emblem of the sacred symbol which it represented. The Earl of Warwick, previous to the battle of Towton, kissed his sword hilt when taking a solemn oath to abide the fortunes of the day. In consequence of the pious use continually made of the sword, the blade was frequently emblazoned with the figures of saints, and engraved with some appropriate inscription, generally taken from holy writ. There were however reckless spirits who preferred a profane imitation of these religious sentences. A sword still exists, adorned with the effigies of beatified persons, which bears the following inscription on its hilt: "A new saint, his name is ruffian, and he is ready for every one."* There were other mottos also, which merely contained some moral precept; one of the best runs thus: "Never draw me without reason, or sheath me without honour." The inscription upon Talbot's sword has been already given; and amid other instances of the popularity of this custom, an old French rapier, in the possession of a celebrated living antiquary,† may be adduced, which bears the following sentence upon the blade: "*Si fortune me tormente! l'espérance me contente;*" and from the work which contains a representation of this curious weapon, we learn that "Haniball Gonsaga being in the Low Countries, overthrowne by an English capitaine, and commanded to yield himself prisoner, *kist his sword* and gave it the Englishman, saying

* In the collection of Lewellyn Meyrick, Esq.

† Douce's Illustrations of Shakespeare.

'*Si fortuna me tormenta, il sperenza me contenta.*'" The fashion of engraving mottos upon warlike habiliments extended to the spurs. One of these equestrian appendages, discovered in digging the field where the celebrated battle of Towton* was fought, bore upon the shanks, in the old character used at that time, the words "*En loial amour tout mon cœur.*"

King's College Chapel in Cambridge affords one of the most splendid monuments of the taste and elegance displayed in the architecture of the fifteenth century. The breaking out of the civil wars prevented the completion of the whole structure in a style of similar magnificence. The progress of the useful arts sustained a severe check during the agitated state of the realm in these unhappy dissensions; while the continual sieges of castles reduced the superb creations of a former age to heaps of misshapen ruins. The desolating effects of fire and sword were manifested over the face of the country in the smouldering ashes of whole towns and villages laid waste by a destroying army, and the natural ornaments of the soil swept away in the general devastation, were neglected long after the return of more peaceable times.† The most common fruits and flowers were expensive rarities even in the courts of kings. Henry VII. paid two shillings for the fatal emblem of his house, a red rose, according to a MS. in his own hand-writing still extant in the Remembrance Office; and from the same document we learn that an apple bore an equal and sometimes even a higher price.

* See Archæologia, vol xi. † Rous.

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The sepulchral remains of this age afford specimens of singular delicacy and beauty emanating from the chisels of native sculptors; and although the painter's art was almost wholly confined to the illuminations of MSS., many of which are sketched with a bold and free pencil, and contain very elaborate and very faithful delineations of scenes and subjects connected with national character and costume, the windows of churches and other holy edifices were embellished with a rich blazonry of stained glass, which no subsequent period has ever equalled. The utmost labour was employed by artists of no mean powers in armorial devices. The proud baron viewed the heraldic honours of his family carved in wood and stone over the exterior and interior gates of his castle, wrought in gold and silver and precious stones upon his velvet robes, his chased and polished armour, his shield and helm, and on the shoulders of his retainers; painted and worked upon banners, banerolls and pennons, and gleaming in bright colours from the oriel windows of the vast cathedral wherein his ancestors reposed.

These splendid emblems of high birth and noble daring were the pride of men delighting in pomp and glitter, and exulting in the lofty descent and valiant deeds of their ancestors. The cognizance and the badge were even more widely extended than the achievements and escutcheons which bore the arms, the former being not only worn to distinguish the prince, noble, or knight to whom it belonged, but also adopted by men of rank espousing the cause of their leader, while the latter was assumed by his friends, followers and dependants. The white hart

of Richard II. only yielded in celebrity to the rival roses of York and Lancaster. The badges belonging to the armorial devices of royal and noble persons, though frequently taken as well as their arms, in consequence of some particular circumstance or extraordinary exploit, were generally like other heraldic bearings, hereditary and assigned; they also appertained to lordships, lands and castles, and the favourite or partizan to whom these rich gifts were granted, obtained a right to the accompanying badge. A curious catalogue of the cognizances to which one branch of the Plantagenets were entitled, is printed in the Archæologia, from the original MS. discovered by Mr. Ellis, in a blank leaf of parchment at the beginning of the Digby MS. in the Bodleian library:—

"This ben the names of the lordshippes with the bages that aperteyneth to the Duke of York.

"Furste, the Dukeshyp of Yorke, with the badges, ben the fawcon and the feterlocke.

"The bages that he beryth by Conysbrow ys the fawcon wyth a mayden ys hedde, and her here hangyng about here shoulders with a crowne aboute her nekke.

"The bages that he beryth of the Erldom of March is a whyte lyon.

"The bages that he beryth by the Erldom of Wilstr. ys a blacke dragon.

"The bages that [he] beryth by King Edwarde is a blewe bore with his tusks and his cleis of gold.

"The bages that he beryth by King Richard ys a whyte herte and the sonne shyneing.

"The bages that he beryth of the Honour of

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Clare ys a blacke bolle rowgh, his hornes and his cleis of gold.

"The bages that he beryth by the feyre mayde of Kent is a white hynde."

This document disproves the popular story told in the old chronicles relative to the "Sun of York," which we now learn was derived by Edward IV. through his father, from Edward of Langley, instead of being assumed in consequence of a remarkable meteor which was said to have appeared previous to the battle of Mortimer's Cross. A curious anecdote respecting the falcon and fetterlock has been preserved by Anstis and Dugdale: "It had been," says the latter writer, "the device of the great-grandfather of Edward IV. Edward of Langley first Duke of York, fifth son to King Edward III., who after the king his father had endowed him with the castle of Fotheringay, which he now built in form and fashion of a fetter-lock, assumed to himself his father's falcon, and placed it on a fetter-lock, implying thereby, that he was locked up from the hope and possibility of the kingdom. Upon a time, finding his sons beholding this device set upon a window, asking what was Latin for a fetter-lock, whereupon the father said: 'If you cannot tell me, I will tell you: *Hic hæc hoc taceates,*' revealing unto them his meaning, and advising them to be silent and quiet, as God knoweth what may come to pass. This his great-grandchild Edward IV. reported, and bore it, and commanded that his younger son Richard Duke of York should use this device of a fetter-lock, but opened, as Roger Wall, a herald of that time, hath it."

The livery of the House of York was murrey and blue, that of the House of Lancaster white and blue; the badges belonging to the latter, were the antelope and the red rose, a fox's tail dependant, and a swan argent gorged, and chained or, derived from the De Bohuns; it is to be found on the seal of Humphry De Bohun, Earl of Hereford and Essex in the twenty-ninth year of the reign of Edward I., and on the tomb of his great-granddaughter Eleanor Bohun, Duchess of Gloucester, sister to the first wife of Henry IV. The antelope appears to have been derived from the same family, for the author of the "Regal Heraldry" tells us, that at the meeting of King Henry VIII. and the Emperor Maximilian before Touraine, in 1515, that Edward Stafford, heir general to Eleanor Bohun, appeared in purple satin; his apparel and his barb full of antelopes and swans of fine gold bullion, and full of spangles. From this writer we learn, that the swan is mentioned as a royal device long previous to the accession of the Lancastrian family to the throne. "King Edward I., before his expedition into Scotland, held a solemn feast, and at that time conferred the honour of knighthood on his eldest son; at the close of the banquet, two swans were introduced gorgeously caparisoned with their beaks gilt, 'a most pleasing sight to all beholders,' on which the king made a vow before God and the swans, that he would avenge the death of John Comyn."* The silver swan was worn by Henry V. in the lifetime of his father, and it was also the cognizance of that hero's unfortunate grandson, and at the disastrous battle of Bloreheath inspired the

* Willement's Regal Heraldry.

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Cheshire gentlemen with the most devoted loyalty. The fox's tail was the appropriate badge of Henry IV., a monarch who is said to have adopted the advice of Lysander,* "When the lyon's skin was too short, to peice it out with the fox's tail." Whether this cognizance was an ancient appendage of the House of Lancaster, or assumed by Bolingbroke at his accession to the throne, we do not learn; but it is evident that Henry V. desired to perpetuate it in his family. Upon the surrender of Rouen, the royal victor entered the city on horseback in the midst of his nobles, followed by a page, well mounted, who carried a lance with a fox's tail tied near the iron point, "in manner of a pennon,"† which attracted the attention of the citizens, some of whom entertained apprehensions that the king who displayed this emblem of subtlety, intended to act treacherously towards them, while others surmised that the device merely signified his intention of conquering all France, and bringing it under his dominion either by force of arms or policy. Camden informs us that Walter Hungerford, steward of the king's household under Henry V., "had conferred upon him by that prince's bounty, and for his eminent services in the war, the castle and barony of Homet in Normandy, to hold to him and his heirs male by homage and service, to find the king and his heirs of the castle of Rouen one lance with a fox's tail hanging to it, which pleasant tenure (continues the author), I thought not amiss to insert here among serious matters." Henry V.‡ assumed as a co

* Camden's Remains. † Goodwin and Monstrelet.

‡ Dallaway's Inquiry into the Origin and Progress of Heraldry in En

zance a beacon and fleur-de-lys crowned. Henry VI. added plumes in saltier to the badges already attached to the House of Lancaster, and adopted also a panther and a portcullis, both belonging to the Beauforts, the illegitimate descendants of John of Ghent, so called from a castle belonging to the Duke of Lancaster in France, where they were all born, "and in regard thereof," says Speed, "bare the portculleys of a castle for the cognizance of their family." Prince Edward of Lancaster, the son of Henry VI., wore in addition to the silver swan before mentioned an ostrich feather for his device, and it is probably from his example derived from that of the Black Prince, that this beautiful cognizance is still retained by the heirs apparent of the British throne.

The necessity of doubting the romantic incident so long supposed to have given this graceful ornament to England's crown, must be a subject of deep regret to those who delight in the picturesque tales of her early chivalry. It has been usually asserted that Edward's heroic son, the Black Prince, wrested the white plume from the brow of the King of Bohemia, upon the field of Crecy, and with it assumed the motto of the conquered monarch, "*Ich Dien*," "I serve," taken by him in allusion to the active service he performed while fighting in the ranks of the King of France.

The authenticity of this popular story is however doubted by the erudite and diligent inquirers of modern times. Dr. Meyrick, to whom the learned world is so deeply indebted, is of opinion that the cognizance and the motto originally belonged to the

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House of Hainault, and that both were adopted by Edward III. and his family, in compliment to Queen Philippa, the consort of that monarch, and daughter of the Count of Hainault and Flanders. We have only the very fallible evidence of tradition to prove that the motto "*Ich Dien*," ever belonged to the King of Bohemia, his service in war, personally, being no other than the usual occupation of sovereigns. The German may be pronounced the natural language of the Court of Hainault, but it was foreign to the Bohemians, and even at this time the names of streets in the different towns of a kingdom now dwindled into a province of Austria, are frequently written in its original Hungarian dialect. Nor is the testimony more conclusive respecting the origin of the feather; the contemporary author cited by Muratori, though he records the gallant bearing of the aged hero, who commanding two of his knights to fasten their horses to that which he rode, was thus led to the charge, makes no mention either of the motto or the feather, and it is certain from Olivarius Vredius, that the crest of the King of Bohemia was a wing.*

The cognizance of the feather was not only worn by the Black Prince, but also by his father Edward III.; and with some mark of distinction, by every branch of that monarch's family. Richard II. in the second illumination of the metrical history, which narrates the melancholy close of his reign, is represented in a surcoat of red, powdered with gold

* Those readers who are interested in the question relative to the cognizance of the feather, will find the subject discussed at length by the able pen of Dr. Meyrick, in the forthcoming volume of the Archæologia.

feathers, marking the feather as the cognizance or sign by which he might be personally known, in contradistinction to the badge which pointed out his retainers.* John of Ghent bore the feather argent, with ermine spots on its quill, in a sable field, and it was retained as a cognizance by his illegitimate descendants of the Beaufort family.

Henry V. while Prince of Wales, had on one of his seals, a swan on each side of the escutcheon, holding an ostrich feather in its mouth. Henry VI.† likewise wore two feathers en saltier as a cognizance, the sinister argent as derived from John of Ghent, surmounted by the dexter or, as royally emblazoned. Edward V. while Prince of Wales, had on each side the escutcheon, a lion holding in its paw an ostrich feather, labelled with the words "*Ich Dien*," and Arthur, Prince of Wales, son of Henry VII. bore them in like manner, with the exception of substituting the dragon of Cadwaladyr for the lion.‡

Amid the numerous cognizances of the proud Plantagenets, the ostrich feather and the roses of York and Lancaster are alone familiar to the present age: the origin of many other devices which still survive is forgotten, and few persons recognize Richard's white hart when contemplating that common sign upon some rural inn, or the silver swan of the princes of Lancaster, so often inviting the traveller to refreshment and repose. The favourite white boar of Richard III. notwithstanding the monarch's endeavours to give it equal celebrity with

* Archæologia, vol. xx. † MSS. Royal Library, marked 18 – 19.

‡ Archæologia, vol. xx.

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the more esteemed badges of his illustrious house, obtained a very short lived triumph, and was consigned to disgrace and oblivion on the usurper's fall. Sandford tells us that he found Richard's white boar among the badges of the House of York, being of silver, with tusks and bristles of gold.* This device was used by Richard previous to his possession of the crown, for a pursuivant then retained in his service, bore the title of Blanche Sanglier.

The badges of potent nobles often vied with those of princes in public estimation; none of the royal devices however attractive, surpassed the popularity of the famous bear and ragged staff of the great Earls of Warwick. The star of the De Veres has acquired a melancholy dignity in history from its disastrous effect at the Battle of Barnet. It boasts a romantic origin. "The Earls of Oxford," we are told by Fuller, "anciently gave their coat plain, quarterly gules and or; they afterwards took on the first quarter a mullet or star argent, because the chief of their house had a falling star alighting on his shield as he was fighting in the holy land."

Supporters to armorial bearings, in the present time the distinguished mark of noble descent, or of the honourable reward of merit conferred by royal favour, were adopted in the fourteenth century. Menestrier and other writers are of opinion that these striking additions to the blazonry of heraldic devices were suggested by the law of the tournament, in which the shields of the combatants not being employed, were, as we have had occasion to remark, affixed to the stations of their respective owners, either attached to the front of the pavilion;

* Willement.

of each knight, or if the number engaged did not permit such stately accommodation, dependent from the barriers. It was customary for the attendant armour bearers and esquires to appear fancifully arrayed, and we are told that they not unfrequently assumed the guise of the animal, a lion, leopard, antelope, or bear, which constituted the device of their lord, and the appearance of these persons thus picturesquely attired is supposed to have induced men delighting in pomp and splendour to add so magnificent an acompaniment to their armorial devices.*

It is however the opinion of one of our most esteemed antiquaries, that a more simple and obvious circumstance occasioned the introduction of supporters; when the shield charged with armorial bearings was engraved upon a seal there would, in consequence of placing it in the usual form of a circle, be a space left on either side, which those who cherished a taste for the florid ornaments so richly lavished upon all the trappings of the great, would feel anxious to fill up with some appropriate decoration; and they had only to choose from the various badges which belonged to the family of the monarch or noble whose arms they emblazoned.

It was the office of the serviteurs above-mentioned to guard the escutcheon of their lords, and to declare the name and rank of the challenger who should touch or cause his shield to be touched with the point of a spear, the established mode of defiance. Supporters were at first borne singly, the escutcheon of Richard II. is usually represented with only one, a white hart

* Dallaway.

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couchant and ducally gorged beneath a tree, the cognizance of his mother's family which he adopted as a token of his affection and respect; but we have reason to believe from the remark of an old writer, that even previous to that monarch's reign it was the custom to place the shield between two of these superb appendages. In a MS. in the Harleian collection we read that "King Richard IId. forsoke the two antloppys for hys bests, and toke two whyt hartys beryng up the armys with her bakys."* Henry IV. resumed the antelope and gave it a lion for its companion, and Dallaway informs us that the supporters which have been attached to the royal escutcheon by different sovereigns have been varied till the reign of James I. when the unicorn of Scotland was introduced, and has been continued with the lion of England. From the same writer we learn that arms were first borne by Richard I.; that Edward I. added them to the caparisons of his horses, and that Richard II., not content with their appearance on the surcoat, introduced the fashion of embroidering them upon the just au corps or bodice. Henry V. increased the number of his escutcheons "by divers shields disposed in different parts of the tabernacle work of his seal, as of St. George, Edward the Confessor, &c." His son Henry VI. adopted his mode of emblazoning the arms of France with the fleur de lys only.

The application of arms to the coin of the realm is, we are told by Dallaway, of great antiquity. In that author's inquiry into the origin and progress of heraldry in England, we learn upon the authority of

* Harleian MSS. 2259.

Barrington, that the Scutagium was paid with escues, upon which a shield was impressed. Speed also, he tells us, gives a coin of Edmund, king of Sicily, brother of Henry III. of England, which bears his escutcheon on the reverse. Edward III. struck a gold noble after his conquests in France, upon which is exhibited an effigy of the king standing in a ship, and bearing a shield charged quarterly with the arms of France and England, and on the reverse lions crowned, and fleur de lys. Henry VI. placed his escutcheon on the centre of a rose. The quarter rial of Edward IV. bears his own cognizance, the rose *en soleil*. A silver coin struck by Perkin Warbeck in 1494 has the full escutcheon and cognizance of the house of York.

With respect to the coins circulated in England during the period which the present history embraces, we are told by Dr. Henry, that anciently the English nominal pound contained a real troy pound of silver, weighing five thousand four hundred grains troy; that of this pound of silver were coined two hundred and forty pennies, the largest coin then in use, weighing each twenty-two and a half troy grains, and that the money of England continued on the same footing from the conquest till near the middle of the fourteenth century, when it sustained a considerable alteration. Edward III. in 1346 coined two hundred and seventy pennies, weighing each only twenty troy grains instead of twenty-two and a half, out of a tower pound of silver; by which the value of the nominal pound was reduced from sixty shillings of our money to fifty-one shillings and eight pence.

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Another alteration took place under the same monarch in 1351; he caused groats to be coined weighing only seventy-two grains instead of ninety, the original weight of four pennies, by which the nominal pound was brought down to forty-six shillings and sixpence of our money, at which rate it continued until after the commencement of the period we are now delineating. By an act of parliament passed in the thirteenth year of Henry IV., 1412, it was directed, "That by reason of the great scarcity of money in the realm of England, the pound tower should from the feast of Easter following, be coined into thirty shillings by tale." "A strange imagination," says our author,* "that diminishing the value of the nominal pound would make money more plentiful!" and yet it was on this groundless fancy that all the above and subsequent changes were made. By the last regulation the value or quantity of silver in the nominal pound was reduced to thirty-eight shillings and nine-pence of our money; and no farther diminution took place during half a century throughout the reigns of Henry V. and Henry VI. Edward IV. in 1464, by coining thirty-seven shillings by tale out of the tower pound of silver brought down his groats, the largest coin then in use, to forty-eight troy grains; and the intrinsic value of the nominal pound to thirty-one shillings of our money, and thus it remained until long after the conclusion of the present period. "These successive changes in the value or quantity of silver in the nominal pound of coin," continues Dr. Henry, "which could add nothing to the real riches of the

* Henry.

kingdom, were productive of many inconveniences. Every change deceived the people for some time to their loss; and occasioned great confusion in the payment of debts, rents, annuities, and in all mercantile and money transactions." The only gold coins that were struck in England during the reigns of Henry IV., Henry V., and Henry VI.. were nobles, with their halves and quarters. The first nobles of Henry IV. weighed a hundred and twenty grains, and their value was twenty-one shillings and three halfpence, the same weight and value of those of his predecessor Richard II. But in the last year of his reign the noble was reduced to an hundred and eight grains, value nineteen shillings, and suffered no farther diminution during the two succeeding reigns. In 1444 the want of small change was so severely felt that the commons presented a petition to the parliament, which assembled in Westminster on the twenty-fifth of February in that year, praying for a remedy of the evil, and setting forth the inconvenience which they sustained in the following words: "*Please it unto your sad and high discrecions to consider the grete hurt that the pore communes of this noble roielme of Englond have and suffer at this tyme for default of half penyes and farthinges of silver; insomuch that men travelling over contries for part of their expences of necessite must depart our Sovereign Lord's coigne, that is to wete a peny in two peices, or elles forego all the same peny for the paiment of an half peny, and also the pouere common retaillours of viteille and of oyer needful thinges for defaute of such

* Parliament Rolls.

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coigne of half penyes and farthinges oftentimes may not sell their said viteilles."

*The silver coins were groats, pennies, half pennies and farthings. In the fourth year of Edward IV.'s reign a new coinage took place, by virtue of an indenture with William Lord Hastings. The gold coins were then reduced to twenty pounds sixteen shillings and eight pence in the pound weight, by tale; that is, there were to be made out of each pound of gold fifty nobles, to be current at eight shillings and four pence. It was at this time also that Edward reduced the silver coin as mentioned above. These new nobles were called rials, a term borrowed from the French, who gave that name to their coin on account of its bearing the figure of the king in his royal robes, "but which," says Ruding, "was ill-applied to coins bearing the same impression as the former nobles. This change of name was probably intended to obviate the inconvenience which might have resulted from the nobles in currency and the nobles in account being of different value." Edward IV. in 1466 struck gold coins called angels, from the figure of an angel on the reverse; and their halves called angelets. The angel weighed eighty grains, passed for six shillings and eight pence of the silver money of those times, and was worth fourteen shillings and a penny of our money.

This new species of money being of the value of a noble, was called a noble angel. The noble was distinguished on the reverse by a sun, which was the impress of Edward, and by him first introduced

* See Ruding on the Coins of England.

upon the coins of England, surmounted by a rose, the badge of the House of York. Edward on his English silver coins is styled, *Edward Dei gratia Rex Angliæ et Franciæ,* and on the reverse of the groats is placed this inscription, *Posui deum adjutorem meum,* with the place of mintage in an inner circle. The half groats have as much of the legend as the size will admit, the penny, half-penny, and farthing, have the name of the mint only on the reverse. Edward's gold coins have the addition of *Dominus Hibernia* to this title. On some of his Irish money the king's title is set forth in the same manner as it is upon his English silver coins, but on others he is styled simply *Edwardus Dei gratia Dominus Hibernia.* The reverse of these pieces have either the place of the mintage alone, or the addition of the motto which appears upon his English silver coins.

In order to avoid the necessity of resuming the subject of the coinage of the realm in a succeeding chapter, it may not be deemed out of place to mention here the changes which were wrought under Henry VII. Richard III., although he turned his attention to the coin, did not reign long enough to execute any plans that he might have meditated; his successor made no alteration in the standard of the coin, but introduced several material variations from the usual type. He it was who first placed an arched crown upon the gold and silver pieces, with a globe and cross upon the arch. "This," says Martin Folkes, "upon most of the coins is only a single arch added to the old crown fleurie which appears upon all our money from the time of King Edward I., but upon some few there appears two lesser arches

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besides, crossing and supporting this as the principal," and the like may be observed in other monuments of this king. By these crowns, we are informed by Ruding, the coins of Henry VII. may be distinguished from those of his predecessors of the same name. In the nineteenth year of Henry VII.'s reign the type of the silver coins was totally changed; the king's portrait in profile, which Folkes tells us was a good representation of his other pictures, appeared with a crown of one arch only, a form which had not been adopted since the days of King Stephen. A single beaded line likewise superseded the double tressure upon the obverse of the groats and half-groats, the inner circles of the reverse which contained the name of the mint was omitted, and the rude pellets which had so long occupied the quarters of the cross were abandoned for a device "which," continues Ruding, "was scarcely less barbarous, an escutcheon of the royal arms surmounted by a cross." On some of these coins the king added to his name either Septimus or the Roman numerals VII., a practice which had been disused ever since the reign of Henry III. on whose coins alone of all our monarchs from the earliest times, numerals or any other distinction of the kind had appeared.* The omission of such marks upon the coins of the first three Edwards and also of the Henries IV., V., and VI. has occasioned difficulties almost insuperable in the appropriation of their respective coins to those monarchs. On some of the ecclesiastical pennies the king (Henry VII.) is represented on the throne, crowned and in royal robes, in his right hand a sceptre

* Ruding.

and in his left a globe. "The type of the usual gold money was continued nearly as before, but his new coin, the sovereign, bore on the obverse the monarch seated in state upon his throne, from whence it derived its name, and on the reverse a double rose, allusive to the union of the two houses of York and Lancaster, with the royal arms in the centre. A rose rial of this monarch's is remarkable for having the arms of France alone in the centre of the double rose on the reverse. The sovereign of Henry VII., a beautiful coin, was worth forty-two shillings of those times, and the half-sovereign twenty-one.

In the slight review of the coins of England suitable to a work embracing so many subjects as the present history, it will now be only necessary to add some account of the mark, a nominal, and not a real coin, and the highest denomination of money next to the tower pound known in England. It was, we are told by Dr. Henry, introduced by the Danes when they obtained a legal settlement in England, in the reign of Alfred the Great, appearing for the first time in the articles of agreement between Alfred and Guthrum the Danish King. "That the mark," continues our author, "had its origin in Scandinavia, and was brought from thence both into France and England, is confirmed by two of the most learned antiquaries of the north; it weighed exactly two-thirds of a tower pound, and is frequently mentioned in the records and histories of this period." The shilling also was not a real coin, but only a denomination of money, and until the reign of Henry VII. groats weighing each forty-three grains were the largest silver coins known. That monarch coined shillings,

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then commonly called festoons, each weighing one hundred and forty-four grains, equal to three groats and twelve pennies. These curious pieces of money have become so exceedingly rare that it is supposed very few of them ever issued from the mint.

Edward IV. purchased the affection and support of the clergy by an unwarrantable stretch of the prerogative in their favour; he granted a charter which released them from their dependence upon lay judicature, the wholesome restriction imposed by the wisdom of Henry II., and discharged the magistracy from taking cognizance of any offence however heinous committed by persons in holy orders. The fruits of this concession appeared in continual outrages upon law, decency, and decorum; the monks are described by Archbishop Bourchier who, scandalized by their profligacy, made an effort to reclaim them, as ignorant, illiterate, licentious, regardless of the duties of their holy office, associating with abandoned women, and dissipating the church revenues in drunkenness, gluttony and riot.* Images were multiplied at the shrines and altars, and dignified ecclesiastics, regardless of the warnings which the bold declamations of the Lollards continually afforded them, added to the susperstitious ceremonies already the subject of contempt and horror, and clung with obstinate tenacity to the errors which exposed them to the keenest reproaches of enlightened and inquiring men. One victim suffered from the persecuting spirit of a bigoted and intolerant priesthood, and the ashes of a martyr to a purer creed were scattered to the winds on Tower Hill.

* Wilkin Concil.

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The jealousy which had long existed between the begging orders and the secular clergy, broke out in quarrels which were carried on with great acrimony during this reign. The former laid claim to superior sanctity upon the score of their poverty, and were objects of profound veneration both to the pious and the dissolute; the devout portion of the community reverenced them as the firmest supporters of the true religion, and men trembling on the brink of eternity, and looking back with terror upon a life passed in crime and sensuality, trusted to the merits of this holy fraternity for the expiation of their sins, and paid immense sums for the privilege of mingling their dust with the reliques of saints in the hallowed cemeteries belonging to mendicant friars. The burial ground of Christchurch, attached to the convent of the Grey Friars, in London, was crowded with multitudes, who eagerly sought a resting place within its sacred walls. Weaver in his Funeral Monuments tells us that six hundred and sixty-three persons of quality procured graves in this secure asylum from the assaults of the arch enemy of man. Emboldened by their popularity the begging orders loudly and fearlessly maintained that they were the peculiar favourites of heaven, and therefore entitled to superior consideration from the faithful, on whose charity, like the early apostles, they were content to subsist. The endowed ecclesiastics answered these attacks with equal rancour and vehemence, condemning the assertions of their ambitious brethren as false and pernicious, and appealing at length to the pope, obtained a bull which

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pronounced this alarming doctrine to be impious and heretical.

Edward IV. was in himself religious, according to the strange notions of his age and creed; he laid his hand upon the altar crimsoned with the blood of prisoners murdered in cold calculating policy, when the heat and fervour of battle had subsided; and observing the outward ordinances enjoined by the church, never throughout his reign sacrificed a single criminal indulgence to a sense of duty, or in obedience to the precepts of the master whom he professed to serve. Yet reckless, as every action of his life proved him to be of the divine commands, the affection of a parent anxious for the spiritual as well as the temporal welfare of his offspring produced a series of instruction for the benefit of his son, which would have done honour to a purer spirit and a less corrupted heart. Had no other record existed of Edward IV. he would have appeared to posterity decked with all the attributes which could exalt the parent, the christian, and the king.

Prince Edward with judicious selection was entrusted to the government of his maternal uncle, Lord Rivers; and the document which contains the orders issued for the regulation of his studies and his household is curious, in not only illustrating the monarch's tender solicitude for his son's improvement in learning, piety, and every accomplishment which could adorn a gentleman, but also the mode usually pursued in the education of the youthful nobility of the age. These rules written under the immediate direction of Edward IV. are preserved

amid the Sloane collection of MSS. in the British Museum.* CHAP. VIII.

The barbarous practice of torture continued to flourish, to the deep disgrace of the legislature; Cornelius Shoemaker, the bearer of dispatches from Queen Margaret, was seized at Queenborough, 1468, and "tormented with fire," to force him to discover the names of those peers and gentlemen who dared carry on a correspondence with the exiled family. In the Tower existed "a horrid brake or rack, called the Duke of Excester's daughter," the production of that nobleman's inventive cruelty when constable. Sir John Fortescue, with a spirit highly to his honour, reprobates this inhuman method of wringing a confession from the lips of an agonized wretch; and in his excellent work addressed to Prince Edward of Lancaster, endeavoured to inspire a better feeling in the breast of his royal pupil: his arguments founded upon the fallibility of the evidence thus obtained were quite sufficient to convince the understanding, but the system was too well adapted to the ferocious tempers of the age to be abolished by the most sound and conclusive reasoning.

The picture which this learned person drew of the melancholy effects resulting from so tyrannous a stretch of power, may not be considered irrelevant in this work, more especially as the story to which it alludes affords one of the too numerous instances of the covetous thirst for the possessions of others, which pervaded the minds of every class of the

* The reader is referred to the Sloane MSS. 3479, for these instructions, which are omitted here for want of space.

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community, from titled and coronetted robbers, oppressing for the purpose of spoil, to the needy and envious mob, ready at a moment to take advantage of private or public calamity to load their hands with the plunder of their neighbours.

Sir John Fortescue writes: "Now what man is there so stout and resolute, who has once gone through the horrid trial by torture, be he never so innocent, who will not rather confess himself to be guilty of all kinds of wickedness than undergo the like tortures a second time, who would not rather die once, since death would put an end to all his fears, than to be killed so many times, and suffer so many hellish tortures more terrible than death itself? Don't you remember, my prince, a criminal who upon the rack impeached a certain noble knight, a man of worth and loyalty, and declared that they were both concerned together in the same conspiracy, and being taken from the rack he still persisted in the accusation lest he should again be put to the same question. Nevertheless, being so much hurt and reduced by the severity of the punishment that he was brought almost to the point of death, after he had the viaticum and sacrament administered to him, he then confessed and took a very solemn oath upon it by the body of Christ, and as he was now as he imagined just going to expire, he affirmed that the said worthy knight was innocent and clear of every charge; he added, that the tortures he was put to were so intolerable, that rather than suffer them over again, he would accuse the same person of the same crime, nay, his own father, though when he said this he was in the bitterness of death, when all hopes of re-

covery were over. Neither did he at last escape that ignominious death, for he was hanged, and at the time and place of his execution he acquitted the said knight of the crimes wherewith he had charged him. Such confessions as these, alas! a great many others of those poor wretches make, not led by a regard to truth, but compelled to it by the exquisiteness of their torments."

The disgraceful tyranny exercised by Edward IV. against those persons whose riches held out a temptation to visit them with the suspicion of a connection with the House of Lancaster, and the peculiar hardships which his arbitrary conduct entailed upon the individual to whom Sir John Fortescue refers, is the subject of severe reprehension from the old historians. In the record of 1467, Stow tells us, "also this year in divers places of England many men were arrested, and treason surmised against them, when though many of them were put to death, and the others escaped for great sums, amongst the which Sir Thomas Cooke, Sir John Plumer, knight, Humfrey Heyford, and other aldermen of London were arrested and charged with treason, whereof they were acquitted, but lost all their goods to the king, to the value of four thousand marks or more, as some have written. And for example the foresaid Thomas Cooke, late maior of London, was by one named Hawkins appeached of treason, for the which he was committed to the Tower of London, his place in London seized by the Lord Rivers, and his lady and servants clearly put out thereof. The cause was this: the forenamed Hawkins came upon a season to Sir Thomas re-

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questing him to lend him one thousand marks upon good security, wherefore he answered that he would first know for whom it should be, and for what intent: at length understanding it should be for Queen Margaret, he answered he had no current wares whereof any shift might be made without too much loss, and therefore required Hawkins to move him no farther, for he intended not to deal withal." Fabian, relating the same story, adds, that "Hawkins exhorted the knight to remember what benefits he had received by her, Queen Margaret, when she was in prosperity, as by making him her wardrober and customer at Hampton. But by no means the said Cooke would grant goods nor money; although at the last the said Hawkins required but an hundred pounds, he was fain to depart without the value of a penny, and never came again to move him, which so rested two or three years after, till the said Hawkins was cast into the Tower, and at length brought to the brake, called the Duke of Excester's daughter, by means of which pain he shewed many things, among the which the motion was one that he had made to Sir Thomas Cooke, and accused himself so far that he was put to death. By means of which confession the said Sir Thomas was troubled as before is shewed, when the said Sir Thomas had laid in the Tower from Whitsuntide till about Michaelmas, in the which season many inquiries were made to find him guilty, and never quit till one jury by means of Sir John Fogg, the under treasurer, indicted him of treason, after which an oyer and terminer was kept in the Guildhall, in which sat with the mayor the

Duke of Clarence, the Earl of Warwick, the Lord Rivers, Sir John Fogg, with other of the king's council, to the which place Sir Thomas was brought, and there arraigned upon life and death, when he was acquitted of the said indictment, and had to the Counter in Bread Street, and thence to the King's Bench. After a certain time that he was thus acquitted, his wife got again possession of the house, the which she found in evil plight, for the servants of the Lord Rivers * and Sir John Fogg had made havock of what they listed." "Also," says Stow, in his account, "at Sir Thomas Cooke's place of Giddy Hall, Essex, another set of servants had destroyed the deer in his park, his conies, and fish, and spared not brass, pewter, bedding, and all that they might carry: for the which might never one penny be gotten in recompence, nor Sir Thomas be delivered till he had paid eight thousand pounds to the king, and eight hundred to the queen, and for that Sir John Markham, knight, Chief Justice of the Pleas, determined, somewhat against the king's pleasure, that the offence committed by Sir Thomas Cooke, was no treason but misprision only, the which was no desert of death, but to be fined at the king's pleasure. The Lord Rivers, and the Duchess of Bedford, his wife, procured that he lost his office afterwards, in the twelfth year of Edward's reign."

Besides the spoiling of his house by the servants of Lord Rivers and Sir John Fogg, that oppressed knight sustained other severe losses; we are told by Fabian, that "overmuch of his jewels and plate, with great substance of his merchandize as cloth of silk and cloth of arras, were discovered by such persons

* The father of Antony Wydeville.

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as he had betaken to keep them, and came to the treasurer's hands, which to the said Sir Thomas was a great enemy, and finally after many persecutions, being compelled to pay the sum of eight thousand pounds to the king, was set at large but not permitted to rest, being troubled by a new demand from the queen, who claimed as her right a hundred pounds for every thousand paid to the king by way of fine. For the which, after long suite and great charge, he was in conclusion fain to agree, and to give her good pleasure besydes many good gifts that he gave unto his counseyle?"

The corrupt and imperfect administration of justice was the subject of grievous complaints in this age. During a suit at law the armed retainers of the contending parties not unfrequently decided the question by the sword, or the more powerful disputed the sentence with the same weapon: the laity could scarcely obtain common justice in any legal process against the clergy, who claimed their exemption from the jurisdiction of the civil courts,* and were judges in their own causes: the great number of sanctuaries was also very inimical to the redress of injuries by affording protection to men flying from the commission of the grossest outrages, or overwhelmed with debt defying their creditors from these secure asylums; a refuge held sacred by every monarch except Edward IV. The low salaries of the judges rendered them open to bribery, and perjury became a trade, numbers of people selling their oaths for hire when witnesses were required, and receiving money for their verdicts when summoned as jurors; such was the universal corruption and,

* Wilkin's Concil.

profligacy of a nation who, to judge by their actions, worshipped gold as their god. Notwithstanding the abuse of the law it was studied by vast numbers of persons; in the reign of Henry VI. there were no less than two thousand students of that learned profession belonging to the Inns of Court, and the number of attornies sustained so vast an increase, particularly in Norfolk and Suffolk, that an Act of Parliament was made in 1455 to reduce them to fourteen, namely, six in each county, and two in the city of Norwich. Speaking of the common law of this period, Sir Mathew Hale observes, "Touching the reports of the years and terms of Henry IV. and V., I can only say, they do not arrive either in the nature of the learning contained in them, or in the judiciousness or knowledge of the judges and pleaders, nor in any other respect arise to the perfection of the last twelve years of Edward III. But the times of Henry VI. as also of Edward IV. and Edward V. were times that abounded with learned and excellent men. There is little odds in the usefulness and learning of these books, only the first part of Henry VI. is more barren, spending itself much in learning of little moment, and now out of use; but the second part is full of excellent learning." The precarious tenure by which the opposing houses of York and Lancaster held the crown was highly favourable to the interests of the House of Commons; dependent upon the suffrages of that august assembly for their security, they dared not oppose the rights for which they boldly contended, and although at different periods during the triumph of party, many grievous abuses occurred, upon the return of

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more tranquil times these seldom failed to be inquired into and redressed. All the acts of the Parliament convened at Coventry in 1460, were revoked the next year, in consequence of the false and illegal returns of the members who were named by the king and the sheriffs, without the suffrages of the people: and several severe laws were enacted for the punishment of similar offences. Elections gradually became purer and better regulated, and the Commons acquired great expertness in business, profiting by the circumstances of the times, and the concessions granted in moments of need to strengthen their influence and legalize their proceedings: but whilst protecting their own privileges, and establishing their own authority, satisfied with maintaining their right of deciding all important questions relating to the government and the succession, they too frequently sanctioned the most cruel and unjust actions of the monarch who solicited their assistance. A few Parliaments assembled in the reign of Richard II. and Henry VI. were conspicuous for their integrity, and the wisdom with which they framed measures to counteract any real or suspected mischievous intentions on the part of designing men; but these were solitary instances of virtue; generally speaking they lent themselves to every barbarous scheme of ambition or revenge proposed by the faction highest in power, at one time yielding the right to the house of Lancaster, at another to the line of York, and alternately sweeping away whole crowds of the partizans of Edward and of Henry, as the white or the red rose gained the ascendance.

The expences of the members of the House of

Commons were still defrayed, as in more early times, by their constituents; but there was no longer any difficulty in procuring representatives: on the contrary, a seat in Parliament became the coveted object of a private gentleman's ambition. A letter preserved in Fenn's collection proves that nearly the same interest was made, the same recommendations employed, and the same promises held out, which the candidate and his friend put into requisition in these days of Parliamentary importance and grandeur. CHA P. VIII.

James Arlblaster, the agent of a person of consequence, writes to the bailiff of the borough of Maldon in these terms. "Right trusty friend, I commend me to you to call your mind, that like as ye and I communed of, it were necessary for my lady and you els her servants and tenants to have this parliament as for one of the burgesses of the town of Maldon, such a man of worship and of wit as were towards my said lady; and also such one as is in favour of the king, and of the lords of his council nigh about his person; certifying you that my said lady for her part and such as be of her council be most agreeable, that both ye, and all such as be her farmers, and tenants and well wishers, should give your voice to a worshipful knight, and one of my lady's council, Sir John Paston, which stands greatly in favour with my Lord Chamberlain; and what my said Lord Chamberlain may do with the king and with all the lords of England, I trow it be not unknown to you most of any man alive. Wherefore by the means of the said Sir John

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Paston to my Lord Chamberlain, both my lady and ye of the town could not have a meeter, properer man for to be for you in the parliament, to have your needs sped [interests forwarded] at all seasons. Wherefore I pray you labour all such as be my lady's servants, tenants, and well wishers, to give their voice to the said Sir John Paston, and that ye fail not to speed my lady's intent in the matter, as ye intend to do her a great pleasure as if you gave her 100*l.* And God have you in his keeping. Written at Fishly, the 20 day of September." For more than a century the wages of the members of the House of Commons were sometimes higher and sometimes lower; but at length in the reign of Edward III. they became fixed to four shillings a day for a knight of a shire, and two shillings a day for a citizen or burgess, and remained at that rate as long as they continued to be paid.

Parliaments were usually of very short duration, seldom exceeding three sessions of a few weeks continuance. The parliament which deposed Richard II. and raised Henry IV. to the throne, sate only one day, and business of scarcely inferior consequence to the welfare of the realm, was dispatched with speed unknown to the long deliberations and profound debates of a later age. Protracted sessions would have been too oppressive to the people, on account of the wages which the members received, and which bore heavily upon the electors; and the inconvenience attending a long absence from home, to men whose pleasures and occupations centered in the country.

The court and the capital was at this period only the resort of persons called thither by duty or business, and it was not until several succeeding reigns that private gentlemen became so enamoured of the amusements of large cities as to forsake their provincial residences, and occasion the enactment of statutes to oblige them to return to their rural abodes as soon as the session concluded. CHAP. VIII.

The members of the House of Peers were compelled to attend parliament at their own expence, it being one of the services which they were called upon to perform for the baronies held of the crown, and like the commons, except upon important occasions, when their presence was necessary at court, they were usually found upon their own estates, pursuing the pleasures of the chace, and living amongst their dependants and retainers, in the gross and boundless hospitality which rendered them so potent and so popular in the counties which owned their sway.

The necessity of denying the authenticity of those beautiful poems attributed to the pen of Rowlie despoils the reign of Edward IV. of its brightest ornament; but the question respecting the forgery seems so completely set at rest, that it would be more than useless to attempt to claim those splendid poems for a reign in which the genius of poetry, judging from undisputed evidence, was certainly on the decline.

The verses of Harding, who has left ample specimens of the mediocrity of his talents, in a poem entitled the Chronicle of England, are very poor indeed; but as an historical record of the events included in the last sixty years of which he was a

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living witness, the work is exceedingly valuable. Harding was received very early in life into the family of the gallant Hotspur, and his testimony, given with a solemn assurance of its truth, goes far to exculpate the Earl of Northumberland from the charge of deliberate treachery towards Richard II. which has been so strongly urged against him. The poet asserts that Henry IV. mounted the throne in opposition to the expressed will of the Percies, who, when "the sied Kynge Henry made Kynge Richard vnder durese of prison in the toure of London in fere of his life to make a resignation of his right to him," were inclined to support the more just pretensions of the Earl of March to the crown of England, and imputes their concurrence in the usurpation of Bolingbroke to necessity alone. The account of Henry of Lancaster's accession is curious, and affords a fair sample of the author's style:—

"Then went they to a free election,
Seyng the youth then of the Mortimer,
That Erle of the Marche by trewe direccion
Was there, and heire of Englonde then most nere
To king Richarde, as well did there appeare,
Consydred also the might of Duke Henry,
They chose him kyng, there durst none it deny.

"Therle of Northumberlande there had sent
His power home by councell of Duke Henry,
So did his son Henry that truly ment,
Supposyng wel the Duke wolde not vary
From his othe, he in no wyse contrary,
And he and hys kepte all theyr power
Tyll he was crowned kyng, as it did apper.

"Therles two then of Northumberlande,
Of Worcester, and sur Henry Percy,

Councelled hym there fro his othe not to varye,
And though at eve he did to theim applie
On the morowe by a pryve counseyl
He would be crowned kyng without fayle."

With the exception of Anthony Wydeville, Earl Rivers, who wrote with elegance and tenderness, three or four names totally unknown to fame alone are to be found in the poetical record of Edward's reign. But the period is remarkable for the earliest mention of a court bard, under the appellation of the "king's poet laureate." John Kay, the person thus appointed, has not however left a single verse to enable posterity to form a judgment of his pretensions to so exalted and honourable an office. The custom of remote antiquity, of crowning a popular bard with a laurel wreath, was adopted at the universities for the encouragement of talent, and at Oxford in particular, where numerous instances occur of the garland being given to the successful candidate for academical honours. * Warton tells us that "about the year 1470, one John Watson, a student in grammar, obtained a concession to be graduated and laureated in that science, on condition that he composed one hundred Latin verses in praise of the university, and a Latin comedy. Another grammarian was distinguished with the same badge, after having stipulated that at the next public act he would affix the same number of hexameters on the great gates of St. Mary's church, that they might be seen by the whole university." Warton also mentions one Maurice Byrchensaw, who was publicly crowned with laurel by the hands of the chancellor; and another student, named Skelton, who received

* History of Poetry.

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the same mark of distinction, and was permitted to wear his laurel at Cambridge. Our author likewise observes: "With regard to the poet laureate of the Kings of England, an officer of the court remaining under that title to this day, he is undoubtedly the same that is styled the king's versifier, and to whom one hundred shillings were paid as his annual stipend, in the year 1251; but when or how that title commenced I will not pretend to determine, after the searches of the learned Selden on this question have proved unsuccessful. It seems most probable that the barbarous and inglorious name of versifier gradually gave way to an appellation of more elegance and dignity, or rather that at length those only were in general invited to this appointment who had received academical sanction, and had merited a crown of laurel for their abilities in Latin composition, particularly Latin versification. Thus the *king's laureate* was nothing more than "a graduated rhetorician employed in the service of the king." That he originally wrote in Latin appears from the ancient title of *versificator;* and may be moreover collected from the two Latin poems, which Baston and Gulielmus, who appear to have respectively acted in the capacity of royal poets to Richard the First and Edward the Second, officially composed on Richard's crusade and Edward's siege of Striveling castle.

Though Warton has unaccountably omitted the name of Earl Rivers in his enumeration of the poets of this reign, the earl has obtained a distinguished place in the catalogue of noble authors. The tender consideration and courteous deference to the fair sex manifested by this chivalric personage in re

fusing to promulgate the sarcasms of Socrates against women in a new language, has already been mentioned to his honour. The translation of the Dictes and Sayings of the Philosophers, alluded to above, was the laudable and pleasing employment of the earl's seclusion at Ludlow, while superintending the education of the young prince his nephew. The pious and accomplished writer states in his preface the manner in which the French version of these classic authors fell into his hands, and the narration displays his finely constructed mind in so amiable a light, and is moreover so interesting, that no apology need be made for its insertion in these pages.* "Whereas it is so that every humayn creature by the sufferaunce of our Lord God is born and ordeyned to be subject and thralled unto the storms of fortune, and so in divers and many sundry wayes man is perplexed with worldly adversities, of the whiche I Antoine Wydeville Erle Ryuers Lord Scales, &c. have largely and in many different maners have had my parte and of him releived by the infinite grace and goodness of our said Lord, through the means of the mediation of mercy, which grace evidently to be known and understood hath compelled me to set aparte all ingratitude and droofe (drove) me by reson and conscience as far as my wretchedness woulde suffice to give therefore singular lovynges and thankes, and exorted me to dispose my recovered lyf to his service, in folowing his lawes and commaundements, and in satisfaction and recompense of mine iniquities and fawtes before donn, to seke and execute the workes that might be most acceptable to

* Ames's History of the Art of Printing.

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hym; and as far as my frailness wold suffer me, I rested in that wyll and purpose during the season I understood the Jubylee and pardon to be at the holy appostle Seynt James in Spain, which was the year of grace a thousand CCCCLXXIII. Thenne I determined me to take that voyage, and shipped from Southampton in the month of July the said year, and so sayled from thens till I come to the Spanish sea; there thenne for a recreacyon, and passing of time I had delight, and axed to read some good historye, and among other there was that person in my company a worshipful gentleman called Louis de Breteylles, which greatly delighted him in all vertuous and honest things, that sayd to me he had there a book that he trusted I should like right well, and broughte it to me, which book I had never seen before, and is called "The Saynges and Dictes of the Philosophers," and as I understand it was translatyd out of Latin into French, by a worshipfull man called Messire Jehan de Teonville Provost of Parys. When I had heeded and looked upon it as I had tyme and space, I gave thereto a very affection; and in special because of the holsom and swete saynges of the paynims which is a glorious fayre myrrour to all good christian people to behold and understand; over that a greate comforte to every well-disposed soul; it speaketh also universally to the example, weal, and doctrine of all kynges, princes, and to people of every estate. It lauds virtue and science, it blames vices and ignorance, and albeit as I could not at that season nor in all that pilgrimage time, have leisure to oversee it well at my pleasure, whilst for the dispositions that be-

longeth to a taker of jubylee and pardons, and also for the great acquaintance that I founde there of worshipful folkes, with whom it was fittinge I should keepe good and honest company, yet nevertheless it rested still in the desirous favour of my minde, intending utterly to take these with greater acquaintance at some other convenient time, and so remaining in that oppynyon after such season as it listed the king's grace to commaunde me to give my attendance upon my lord the prince, and that I was in his service; when I had leisure I looked upon the said book, and at the last concluded in myself to translate it into the English tongue." The Earl Rivers also clothed the Morale Proverbes of Christine of Pisa in an English dress. "In this translation," says Walpole, "the earl discovered new talents, turning the work into a poem of two hundred and three lines, the greatest part of which he contrived to make conclude with the letter E, an instance at once of his lordship's application and of the bad taste of an age which had witticisms and whims to struggle with as well as ignorance." Caxton, in enumerating the works of this nobleman, mentions a third translation from the French of "The booke named Cordyale or Memorare Novissime," and, "over that divers balades against the seven dedely synnes." But the most interesting of all the earl's productions is assuredly the stanzas which he composed during his last imprisonment, when the world was fast fading away, and a yawning grave threatened to close prematurely his eventful life: this ballad was printed in the first edition of this ill-fated nobleman's reliques from an imperfect copy preserved by Rous, the defects of

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which were afterwards supplied by the Fairfax manuscripts in the Sloanian collection. The language may appear uncouth to the modern reader, but the mild yet dignified resignation which it breathes, cannot fail to excite the warmest feelings of admiration for the virtuous nobleman who could view approaching death with so calm a gaze.

" Sumwhat mysynge
And more more nynge
In remembrynge
The unstydfastnesse.
This world beynge
Of such whelynge
The contraryinge
What may I guess?

" I fear dowtles
Remediles
Is now, to sese
My woeful chaunce
For unkyndness
(Withoutenless) To speak plainly.
And no redress
Me doth avaunce. Urges on my fate.

" Wyth displeasaunce
To my grievaunce
And no surance
Of remedy.
Lo in this traunce
Now in substaunce
Such is my daunce
Willing to die.

" Methynkes truly
Boundyn am I
(And that gretly)
To be content.

Seyng pleynly
That fortune doth wry - Doth turn aside.
All contrary
From mine entent.

" My lyff was lent
Me on entent,
Hytt is nigh spent
Welcome fortune.
But I neer went - - I never thought.
Thus to be shent - - Thus to be cut off.
But so hytt ment
Such is her wonne. - her custom."

These sad yet unmurmuring reflections on the mutability of fortune, are pointed out by the early editor of the earl's works to be written in imitation of a poem of Chaucer.

The reign of Edward IV. boasts a female writer in Juliana Berners, daughter of Sir Simon Berners or Barnes, sister of the first Baron of Berners, and the prioress of the convent of Sopewell in Herefordshire. This lady's works, consisting of three English tracts on hawking, hunting, and heraldry, appeared in the " Boke of St. Alban's," so called because printed in that monastery soon after the introduction of the typographic art in England. Dallaway attributes the devotion of this amazonian nun, to studies apparently so incompatible with the duties enjoined by monastic vows, to the licence granted to the superiors of convents who were exempt from the austerities practised by the lower orders of the community over which they bore sway, and indulging in unrestrained intercourse with society participated freely in the fashionable amusements of the day. Being descended from a noble house, the prioress

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was permitted to take the title of Dame, and she is described by her biographers as a woman of majestic beauty and heroic spirit. Holinshed styles her "a gentlewoman indued with excellent giftes of body and mind," and tells us that she took great delight in the exercises and sports of the field. The treatise upon hunting is in verse, but the claims of the writer to original composition are disputed both by Warton and Dallaway who suspect that the works which bear her name are merely translations from the French. It was however a bold effort of female genius to enter the lists thus early.

CHAPTER IX.

Absence of Prince Edward at Ludlow at the Time of his Father's Death —and of Gloucester in the North of England—Proceedings of the Council—Disappointment of the Queen's Wish—Errors committed by her Party—Gloucester takes the Oath of Allegiance—Buckingham's Message—Meeting between Gloucester and Rivers—Arrest of the Queen's Relations—Gloucester's Dissimulation—Alarm of the Queen—her melancholy Situation—Joy of Hastings—Visit of the Chancellor to the Sanctuary—Panic of the Citizens of London—Edward enters the Metropolis—is lodged in the Tower—Temptations offered to Gloucester—Feebleness of the opposing Party—Gloucester's ambitious Hopes—Co-operation of the Nobles—their Expectations from the Protector—The blind Confidence of Hastings—Alarming Rumours spread by Gloucester—Accusations of the Wydevilles—Alarm of Stanley—Hastings is summoned to the Council—his Conversation on the Road—Change in the Protector's Demeanour —Arrest of Hastings—his Execution—Character of Hastings—Interview between Gloucester, Buckingham and the Citizens of London —Particulars of the late Affair proclaimed—Observations upon it.

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AT the period of Edward's decease, the heir of his crown resided at Ludlow castle, under the care of the Earl of Rivers his governor, and attended by Lord Richard Gray his uterine brother, and Sir Thomas Vaughan his chamberlain; he had been placed upon the border for the purpose of curbing the turbulent disposition of the Welch, who awed by the presence of their youthful prince, restrained

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the fierceness of their spirits, and yielded obedience to the laws. This disposal of Edward's person was also supposed to have been the result of deep anxiety on the part of his mother, to cherish a mutual affection between the royal boy and his near relations the Wydevilles, to whom, if domesticated in early life and secured from the evil influence of designing men, he would in all probability form a strong attachment. They were men of virtue and integrity superior to their age, and it was natural that the queen should wish, both for their advantage and that of her son, that they should become the chief advisers and councillors of his riper years. Gloucester was likewise absent in the north of England, being in the command of the expedition against Scotland at the time of his brother's death; and the Duke of Buckingham, an ambitious aspirant, just entering the political arena, was also at a distance from the capital.

Edward's right appeared to be so clear and indisputable, that the most suspicious person could not anticipate the possibility of any plausible pretext arising to set him aside; he was proclaimed king, and letters filled with professions of loyalty and obedience and personal assurances to the same effect, poured in from all quarters; but his youth (he was only thirteen) threatened to renew those fierce contentions for power which had shaken the cabinets of Richard II. and of Henry VI.

These apprehensions were too well founded; the struggle commenced in the capital immediately after the deceased monarch had been laid in his grave. A hope of possessing the regency has been attributed

to the queen,' but is confined to conjecture alone; that she desired to engross the highest authorities for her relations is less doubtful, nor could they hope to sustain themselves upon the elevation to which they had been raised by their alliance with the king, unless they were at the head of the administration. The whole circle of the nobles were resolved upon their destruction; Lord Hastings had been engaged in a personal quarrel with Rivers, and though so highly favoured by Edward was committed to the tower, and his life placed in extreme peril in consequence of an affront which he had given to the earl, a result decisive of the blame attached to Lord Hastings, and the rancour with which he had opposed his enemy.* The queen proposed in council that her son should be escorted to the metropolis by the Earl of Rivers and Lord Richard Gray, at the head of a considerable body of men; but Lord Hastings and his party took umbrage at this measure; they resented the idea of surrounding the king with an armed force when he was hastening to meet his friends, and inquired if the reconciliation which had so lately taken place was less cordial on the part of the Wydevilles than it had been on their's; words ran very high, the queen eagerly supported the point so important to her interests, and Hastings, determined to resist it, declared that he would leave the court and withdraw to Calais, should she persist in her design.† The queen irresolute, and fearing to provoke the formidable party headed by her antagonist, yet scarcely trusting to their good faith, relinquished the sole ex-

* More. † Continuation of Croyle.

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pedient which could have preserved her brother, and directed him to repair to London accompanied by no more than two thousand retainers: but the Marquis of Dorset apprehensive of danger, took advantage of his situation as governor of the tower, to prepare for the worst; he employed part of the king's treasure secured in that fortress, in the equipment of a fleet, thus placing himself in a posture of defence. These half measures betrayed the fears and the intentions of the queen's party, without providing against the opposition which they manifestly expected; there were only two modes which could have been pursued with any prospect of safety, a tame and unconditional submission, or a prompt and vigorous display of power, a middle course was fraught with utter ruin.

It is impossible to fix upon the precise period in which the Duke of Gloucester suffered his thoughts to wander to the throne: the account of his brother's death reached him with extraordinary celerity, in consequence of the posts which had been lately established, and from which he now derived infinite advantage. Upon learning the tidings he hastened to York with a retinue of six hundred knights and esquires attired in deep mourning, and directing the late monarch's obsequies to be celebrated in the cathedral, proclaimed his nephew king, summoned the gentlemen of the county to attend, and shewing them an example of loyalty which was unanimously followed, took the oath of allegiance in the presence of the whole assembly.

Nor was Richard content with this display of his attachment to the royal orphan's interests, he dis-

patched letters to the queen with whom he had always been upon good terms, filled with the warmest professions of sympathy and kindness, and freely offered his friendship to all the members of her family.* It is difficult to imagine that conduct apparently so loyal, frank and open, should have been the result of a deep and hideous artifice, but even in allowing him to have been sincere at the time, it is scarcely an alleviation of his guilt in the subsequent falsification of every oath, protestation and promise: he fell with the first temptation. The letters which he received from the discontented nobles completely overthrew his amicable resolutions and decided his future conduct as far as it regarded the unfortunate Wydevilles. †A trusty servant belonging to the Duke of Buckingham posting with eager speed to the north, delivered a message or dispatch from his lord, which probably contained an assurance of support in the expected struggle for the regency, and a warning to take measures to defeat the schemes of his rivals. Richard, it is said, gave audience to the messenger in the dead of the night, and returning an immediate answer, received a second communication whilst upon the road to Northampton, where he proposed to meet the king. He arrived at that town on the morning of the 29th of April, but found only the Earl of Rivers, his nephew having gone forward to Stony Stratford.

The conduct of Rivers in separating himself from young Edward, has exposed him to censure, as exhibiting an intention to prevent an interview between 1483.

* Continuation of Croyle. † Pol. Virg.

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him and Gloucester. Had this been his design it would have been effected with more ease and certainty by pushing forwards with his charge to London, and thereby distancing the pursuit of Richard; as it was, he met the duke frankly, nor does there appear to have been the slightest intention upon his part to prevent the Dukes of Gloucester and Buckingham from joining the king upon the road, consequently if young Edward's departure to Stony Stratford had been the effect of a pre-concerted plan, it could only have delayed the dreaded interview for the space of a single day.

The Duke of Buckingham entered Northampton attended by three hundred men, nearly at the same time in which Gloucester with his train, consisting of six hundred gentlemen, arrived from York.* Lord Rivers welcomed them with warm cordiality, received assurances of equal friendship in return, and the whole party sate down together to enjoy the convivial pleasures of a festal banquet. The Earl of Rivers, perfectly unsuspicious of evil, retired to rest, leaving the coadjutors together to plot the deadly mischief which ensued.† This open conduct upon the part of Rivers must acquit him of the design of separating the uncle from the nephew, with which he was afterwards charged: he sought the repose of his chamber instead of hastening immediately to Stony Stratford, the only chance which remained of speeding forward on the journey, and eluding the vigilance of the duke.

Buckingham and Gloucester with a few private friends admitted to share their councils, sate

* Continuation of Croyle. † More.

until the dawn in deep deliberation; the particulars have not transpired, but they are sufficiently explained by the events which followed: they secured the town, directed some of their party to plant themselves upon the road to Stratford, and ordered the keys of the inn which they occupied to be placed in their custody. When Rivers arose in the morning he found the gates locked; distrust, the companion of guilt, had not entered his noble mind; instead of attempting to escape, he went immediately to Gloucester and inquired the reason of his detention. It would be presumptuous to attempt to appear to be accurately acquainted with all that passed in this interview, but we may fairly infer from the result that if the earl entertained any suspicion it was easily removed. The lords rode together to Stoney Stratford, where they found Edward and his train upon the point of departure, and now the storm burst upon the devoted heads of the Wydevilles. Gloucester, we are informed by Sir Thomas More, having paid a low obedience to his royal nephew, saluting him, according to the usual custom upon his knees, almost instantly turned round and commenced a quarrel with Lord Richard Gray, even in the presence of the king, he accused him of leaguing with the Marquis of Dorset his brother, and the Earl of Rivers his uncle, to compass the rule of the king and the realm, to sow dissension and variance between the different estates, and to subdue and destroy the noble blood of the kingdom, and adduced in proof of his charge the marquis's appropriation of the royal treasure in fitting out vessels of war. The king wise and prudent beyond

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his years, is said by the same authority to have replied, "What my brother marquis has done I cannot say, but in good faith I dare well answer for my uncle Rivers, and my brother here, that they be innocent of any such matters." "My liege," quoth the Duke of Buckingham, "they have kept their dealing in these matters far from the knowledge of your good grace." Gloucester then averred that his own safety demanded the arrest of men who were plotting against his life and honour, and instantly giving Lord Richard Gray and Sir Thomas Vaughan into the custody of his followers, they were sent as prisoners, with Lord Rivers, to the rear.*

The two dukes having obtained possession of the king's person, instead of advancing straight to London, retrograded to form new councils at Northampton. Upon arriving there all young Edward's attendants were replaced by men devoted to Richard's interests, the unhappy monarch remonstrated and wept, but his hard hearted uncle persisted in encompassing him with strangers. At dinner Gloucester, an adept in dissimulation, sent a dish from his own table to Lord Rivers, with a consolatory message, desiring him to be of good cheer, for all should yet be well.† The courageous and kind hearted earl returned thanks to the duke for his courtesy, but desired the bearer to convey the present and the same courteous message to Lord Richard Gray, his nephew, who stood more in need of comfort, since he was young, and to him adversity was strange, but for himself he had been accustomed all his life to vicissitudes, and, inured to evil

* Chronicles of Croyle. † More.

fortune, could sustain it without shrinking. This glimpse of good intentions on the part of the confederates was soon withdrawn; a second deliberation decided the fate of the Wydevilles: Rivers, Vaughan, and Gray, were dispatched under a guard to Pontefract Castle, and all the gentlemen who had accompanied the king from Ludlow, were commanded by the Duke of Gloucester to withdraw from the town, and not to approach the place of his residence under pain of death.*

The direful news of the captivity of her brother and her sons, for Edward was equally a prisoner with his luckless kinsmen, reached the queen a short time before midnight; there needed little exaggeration in the statement to spread the wildest alarm; distracted with terror and grief, fearful of remaining a moment in the palace, which she expected to see beset by the triumphant faction, she assembled her remaining children, and flying without an instant's delay to the abbot's lodgings, took refuge in the neighbouring sanctuary.

Hastings, the lord chamberlain, received the intelligence of the proceedings at Northampton, with barbarous and as it afterwards proved with delusive joy. The performers in the tragedy were secure of his approbation in the destruction of Rivers, and giving him the earliest notice of the earl's imprisonment, directed him to communicate it to the rest of the council. Accordingly he sent information to the chancellor, Rotherham Archbishop of York, of the events which had occurred to the Wydevilles. The prelate was in bed when the

* Chronicles of Croyle.

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chamberlain's messenger arrived, and notwithstanding the assurances which he conveyed from his master that all would still be well, he deemed the tidings so alarming that he arose in affliction and haste, called all his servants up, and even before it was yet day repaired to the queen to offer his consolation and his services; ignorant of the extent of the danger, and dreading the worst, his retainers accompanied him armed, and in the first burst of generous enthusiasm in the cause of oppressed innocence, he resolved to devote himself to the hapless mourner and her injured children.

Sir Thomas More draws a melancholy picture of the situation of the unfortunate lady; his account of the interview which took place between her and the archbishop, is too interesting to be omitted or curtailed. "Aboute whom (the queen) he found muche heavinesse, rumble, haste, and businesse, carriage and conveyance of her stuffe into sanctuary, chestes, coffers, packes, fardelles, trusses, all on menne's backes, no man unoccupied, somme lading, some goyng, some discharging, some commyng for more, somme breaking downe the walles to bring in the nexte waye, and somme yet drew to them that holpe to carrye a wrong way. The queene herself satte alone lowe on the rishes all desolate and dismeyed, whom the archbishop comforted in the best manner he could, shewynge her that hee truste the matter was nothynge so sore as she tooke it for. And that he was putte in good hope and out of feare, by the message sente him from the Lorde Chamberlaine. 'Ah woo worthe him,' quod she, 'for hee is one of them that laboureth to destroye me and my

bloode." Madame, quod hee, be of good chere. For I assure you if thei crowne any other kinge than your sonne, whome they now have with them, we shall on the morowe crowne his brother, whome you have here with you. And here is the greate seale, whiche in likewise as that noble prince your housebande delivered it unto me, so here I deliver it unto you, to the use and behoofe of your sonne, and therewith he betooke her the greate seale, and departed home agayne, yet in the dawning of the daye."

The whole city upon the promulgation of the tidings was in a state of consternation and tumult; the streets were filled with armed men hastening to their respective friends, some offering their services to Hastings, and others flocking to guard the queen in sanctuary. All the peers in London assembled, and Hastings not aware that he was advocating his own ruin, soothed them with declarations of Gloucester's faith, and the necessity of the arrest of those persons who had entered into a conspiracy against the nobles, and who he averred would only be detained in custody until they should have a fair examination and just judgment.* To quiet the people, he caused them to be publicly informed that Gloucester and Buckingham were escorting the king to London to be crowned, and that the Wydevilles had resolved upon the destruction of the king's friends in order that they might have the sole guidance of state affairs. The people were somewhat appeased by these assurances, and on the king's entrance into the metropolis they dismissed their fears.

* Croyland.

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1483. May 4.

The lord-mayor and the aldermen in their scarlet gowns, attended by five hundred citizens in "violette," advanced to meet the monarch at Hornsey Park, and rode with the procession to the bishop's palace; the young king wore a long robe of blue velvet, his attendants were in deep mourning, and Gloucester preceding him bare-headed, conducted himself with so much respect and humility, exclaiming to the multitude, "Behold your king!" that all distrust was immediately removed from the minds of the credulous spectators.

The council which had been previously assembled continued their deliberations. Gloucester had now no rival who could dispute the highest post in the administration; he was unanimously chosen to be protector, but perhaps sustained some disappointment in not having the office of regent conferred upon him. The Archbishop of York, alarmed by the decided part to which he had been prompted by the first fervid ebullition of zeal, had sent to the queen for the great seal which he had so inadvertently resigned; but his inclination to befriend her was sufficiently manifested by his conduct upon that occasion, and he was removed from the chancellorship, the Bishop of Lincoln being appointed in his stead.

The place of the king's residence became the subject of debate; Buckingham strenuously urged the tower, which in its triple capacity of palace, fortress and prison, was admirably adapted to s[redacted]my views which the protector might entertain.* [redacted]he coronation, which at first was intended to have taken place on the fourth of May, was postponed until the

* Croyland.

twenty-second of June, an ominous delay, which young Edward's friends in their anxiety to pursue the destruction of Rivers disregarded. CHAP. IX.

If Richard had seized upon Rivers and Grey merely to secure the protectorate, he probably at this period aspired to a higher dignity. Surrounded by rapacious courtiers eagerly looking up to him for power and place, comparatively few obstacles opposed his wishes, and the strong step which he had already taken in the imprisonment of relations connected with young Edward by such near and such tender ties, had produced a breach which never could be made up: their release might occasion a hollow peace, but must inevitably be followed by an inextinguishable enmity: a few years only would elapse before the king arrived at a proper age to take the government into his own hands, and the fate of the two preceding Dukes of Gloucester, sacrificed for a real or alleged design to usurp the royal authority, warned Richard that similar suspicions would lead to similar results.

In the two preceding minorities the realm possessed a steady band of loyal nobles, jealously watchful over the interests of the young heir, and carefully guarding his rights. Notwithstanding the evils brought on by the private animosities which disunited the cabinet, a moderate share of discretion and firmness in either Richard II. or Henry VI. would have repaired all the mischief arising from misconduct in their early years; both, though certainly ill-educated, and scarcely answerable for all the errors of their reigns, were deposed in consequence of their own misconduct: but Edward V.

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in being deprived of his maternal relations lost every support to his throne. Had Gloucester meant honestly he would have coalesced at first with the Wydevilles, he never could have entertained the slightest dread of a successful combination against him by a party, who in reality, notwithstanding their high honours and dignities, possessed a very small degree of political power, and whose obvious interest it was to conciliate his friendship and support; they were absolutely nothing without him, yet together they might have bade defiance to all opposition. From the enmity of Hastings, while acting honourably in defence of the young king's rights, Richard had nothing to fear; he was new in the lists of the peerage, and though beloved by a large circle of friends, had not the commanding influence with the commons which could alone have enabled him to disturb the government. The feeble efforts subsequently made by Buckingham prove how much the authority of his family had dwindled; and the Lords Howard and Stanley, under the present circumstances, were equally incapable of performing any prominent part: they rose to higher eminence by Richard's favour, and the defection of the latter ultimately turned the scale against him, but it was not until the usurper had filled every honest heart with horror, that so feeble an agent was invested with power to crush him. No one would have dared the temerity to oppose the line of York by a spurious claim of Henry Tudor, while it was supported by Edward's rightful heirs, and though there might have been many fierce quarrels and much "jostling by dark intrigue for place," Gloucester could only have

been restrained to the just limits which the wisdom of former councils and parliaments had placed on the protectorate. CHAP. IX.

It may be alleged in Richard's vindication that he had listened incautiously to the advice of Buckingham, and having in the arrest of the Wydevilles taken a step which could not be retracted, was forced on by uncontroulable circumstances to the commission of an unintended crime. But Gloucester was not a raw inexperienced youth; the cool calculations of his former and subsequent conduct are at variance with this rash involvement in an inextricable dilemma; it is most probable that the busy demon had already placed a crown before his dazzled eyes, that Buckingham's encouraging hints or plainer speeches decided him to make the attempt to grasp it; and, as the necessary preliminary, he imprisoned the only friends of the young king, whom he despaired of attaching to his own criminal interests.

Hastings recommended or sanctioned the measure, because he wished to rid himself of a formidable rival, and was aware that his only chance of obtaining the offices held by Rivers rested in sowing dissention between him and Gloucester. Was Richard ensnared by the chamberlain's policy, the tool of an ambitious lord? Whilst on the march to London at the head of two thousand nine hundred followers, [redacted]mount of his forces when united to those of [redacted]gham and Rivers, and which in the defenceless state of the capital was quite sufficient to overawe a few nobles unprovided with military retainers) he might have sent Hastings to the Tower the moment he dared dispute his will. Gloucester was in

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a position to have realized every justifiable wish, and possessed the command of equally justifiable means in the attainment of an honourable object; had he preserved his integrity, the exertion of his fine talents would have kept both parties dependant upon him; but in aiming at more than the authority which the welfare of his nephew admitted, he was compelled to resort to craft and violence to establish himself upon the slippery eminence he sought to climb. Hastings with short-sighted enmity against Rivers did not perceive the amazing addition which his death would give to Gloucester's enormous power. Buckingham, by whose advice the duke had hitherto acted, was ready to second him in any project; and Lord Howard's interests were directly opposite to those of the young princes.

The marriage of Edward's second son with Lady Anne Mowbray, the baby heiress of the Duke of Norfolk, has been already mentioned; a royal grant had secured her possessions to her infant husband, and Howard the next heir looked with an evil eye upon the duke's investiture of these estates, when the child who stood between him and a fair domain had followed her father to the grave. In any designs against his brother's offspring therefore, Gloucester possessed the means of bribing this nobleman to compliance. Lord Lovel another ambitious aspirant lately emerging from a private station, was [redacted] linked with Richard; he possessed three [redacted] agents in Catesby, Ratcliffe, and Brackenbury, who looked forward to his patronage for their advancement; and Stanley, when at the protector's mercy, was not deemed of sufficient consequence to be made

away with, his life or death seems to have been indifferent to Richard, and he escaped with a blow. Hastings alone remained to be secured, and the duke, whilst he feared to open every scheme of his black heart to Edward's tried and valued friend, seems to have entertained a hope of ultimately prevailing upon him to abandon his royal master's children. But the chamberlain, though stimulated by ambition to depress the queen's relations, and not sufficiently clear-sighted to discern the perils with which the measure was fraught, never contemplated the possibility of Richard's elevation to the throne; he exulted, it is said, that the government had been taken from the Wydevilles without bloodshed, and did not participate in the alarm of many persons who, observing the protector's neglect of the queen, boded evil from so ominous a circumstance.* CHAP. IX.

There was another still more convincing proof that a sinister design existed in Gloucester's heart; he contrived to divide the council, deliberating with his own adherents at Crosby House, the place of his private residence, whilst Hastings, Stanley, the Archbishops of Canterbury and York, and the Bishop of Ely, met at the tower; and it is somewhat difficult to account for the blindness of Hastings to the motives of a line of conduct so singular and so suspicious. If he consented to this separate meeting in order to carry on an intrigue against the Duke of Gloucester, and there is not the slightest record to justify the supposition, Lord Stanley, one of the party, must have been totally ignorant of his plans, for instead of rejoicing in the circumstance as for-

* Chronicles of Croyle.

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warding the private views of the junta, his fears were awakened, he told Hastings that "he misliked these several councils,"* and he likewise very justly commented upon the absurdity of sitting in grave debate upon subjects which were perhaps never discussed in the other assembly. The chamberlain in return assured him that there was nothing to fear, since he possessed a confidante in Gloucester's party who communicated all the duke's secrets to his ear: his answer full of security in the gratitude of a former dependent, is recorded by Sir Thomas More. "My lord on my life never doute you. For while one man is there which is never thence, never can there be thinges ones minded that should sounde amisse toward me, but it should be in our eares ere it were well out of their mouthes." Catesby, a lawyer who had risen to eminence under the liberal patronage of Hastings, was the faithless friend so boundlessly trusted; intimately acquainted with the sentiments of a man who seems to have possessed the virtues of frankness and sincerity in a very high degree, though commissioned by Richard to sound him upon the proposed usurpation, he dared not venture to hint the protector's evil intentions, at least his silence may be fairly inferred by the confidence with which Hastings attended the council when summoned by the protector, notwithstanding a warning conveyed to him by the more distrustful and vigilant Stanley. Had Hastings been aware of Gloucester's meditated treachery and determined to oppose it, the slightest exercise of his judgment would have assured him that not a moment was to be lost ere he prepared to repel by force the evil designs of a man to whom he

* More.

saw numbers daily flocking; and who was manifestly acquiring a strong party in his favour. Catesby reported to his patron the inflexible attachment of Hastings to the young princes, and his ruin was forthwith decided. Gloucester in this instance pursued the same measures which he had adopted at Northampton, and which indeed was the usual policy of men seeking an excuse to perpetrate a deed of unwarrantable violence on the persons of those who stood in the way of their ambition. The old story which had served the purpose of Thomas of Woodstock, of Henry Bolingbroke, of Edward IV. when he murdered Clarence, and of other traitors and tyrants under circumstances nearly similar, was again revived. He pretended that his own life was in danger, and dispatched a letter by Sir Richard Radcliffe to York, declaring that the queen and her relations were plotting to destroy him and all the noble blood in the realm, and conjuring the people of the country to arm in haste, and to repair without delay to his assistance. But who and where were the conspirators of whom Gloucester affected to stand so much in dread? The queen seems to have been utterly deserted; even the ecclesiastics who formed a part of the cabinet and who at first appeared inclined to befriend her, fell into the views of the protector, and abandoned the unhappy offspring of this injured and helpless woman at their utmost need. Elizabeth's eldest son, the Marquis of Dorset, a young man scarcely more than two and twenty, was in sanctuary with Lord Lisle, another relative, but a person of so little consequence that his name is seldom mentioned in the transactions of

CHAP. IX. this turbulent period, while Rivers and Grey were in close custody at Pontefract: but this letter and others to the same purport were calculated to excite alarm in the country and to prepare the people for the occurrence of extraordinary events. The queen and her kinsmen were to bear the blame of having endangered the public peace by their plots and machinations, although when their crimes were positively specified, they amounted to no more than a vague charge of witchcraft; a fact which must exonerate Hastings from his alleged participation in the councils of this already ruined party. If he had either directly or indirectly invited them to join him in depriving Gloucester of the protectorate, the duke would have had a fine field for the exertion of his eloquence, and a colour at least for his assertion that his life was menaced; but failing to prove the existence of any collusion between the chamberlain and the queen's relatives, he resorted to the worn out accusation of sorcery.

Stanley, distrusting some secret mischief, sent an especial messenger to his friend in the dead of the night, and fearing in these times of suspicion and deceit to trust even Hastings with his undisguised sentiments of the protector, darkly shaped out his terrors in a pretended dream. He conjured Hastings to take horse immediately and ride away with him, for he was so much disturbed by a fearful vision wherein a boar attacked both, and wounded them in the head with his tusks, causing the blood to flow down their shoulders, that he had determined to fly; his horse being ready, and everything prepared, if he, Lord Hastings, would promise to use such speed

as would enable them to escape beyond the reach of danger before day. Hastings was at no loss to read the meaning which lurked beneath the metaphor. Gloucester's cognizance was a boar, but with blind security in the duke's friendship (who we are told together with Buckingham, notwithstanding their separate councils, courted the society of the chamberlain), returned a light answer, desired Stanley not to give credit to such vain phantasies, and declared that he was as sure of the man to whom the vision pointed as of his own hand.* CHAP. IX.

Before Hastings was up in the morning a friend of the protector, determined to secure his prey, came to conduct him to the council chamber in the Tower, whither the lords were assembled to consult about the approaching coronation, and as they rode on their way together, Hastings stopped to converse with an ecclesiastic of his acquaintance whom he met in Tower-street. Impatient to have him in the toils, his companion interrupted him, saying, "What, my lord, I pray you come on, whereto talke you so long with that priest, you have no need of a priest *yet!* "† and laughed, but the inference did not strike; the devoted noble rushed headlong to his ruin with a trusting confidence in the good faith of Gloucester which he could scarcely have felt had he been conscious of meditating evil against him. The most trifling incident is sufficient to alarm a guilty mind, but Hastings, fearless and open, went forward without attending to hints which could not have escaped the wary vigilance of a conspirator. Upon the Tower-wharf he halted again to salute a herald of his own

June 13. 1483.

* More. † More.

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name. It happened that at the time in which he had been sent by King Edward to the Tower in consequence of his quarrel with Lord Rivers, he had met the same man in the same place; contrasting the circumstances of their former rencontre at a moment fraught with imminent peril to his life, with the fair prospect which now seemed to open before him, he exclaimed, "Ah, Hastings! art thou remembered when I met thee here once with a hevy hart?" "Yea, my lord," quoth he, "that remember I well, and thanks be to God they gote no good nor you no harm thereby." "Thou wouldest say so," quoth he, "if thou knewest as much as I know, which few know else as yet and more shall know shortly." These words, attributed by Sir Thomas More to the intended execution of Rivers, which however did not take place until several days afterwards, and of which therefore it is probable that Hastings was not assured, have been alleged as a proof that he was engaged in some secret plot which would be soon manifest. But Hastings must have been insane to have uttered this boast in the presence of one of the protector's council, had it alluded to any design which would militate against his interests, and the plot, if indeed the chamberlain was engaged in one, must have been too immature to have warranted this prophetic speech, for we have already seen that Gloucester was reduced to some difficulty to contrive a feasible pretext for any accusation whatsoever.

Hastings having joined the council board, round which Buckingham, Howard, Stanley, with the Bishops of Ely and York, and others, were already

assembled, proceeded to converse upon the subject of their meeting, namely the coronation of the young king, for which Sir Thomas More informs us, that the "pageants and suttelties" were making day and night at Westminster. Gloucester entered about nine, and saluting the meeting courteously, apologized for playing the sluggard that morning; turning to the Bishop of Ely, he commended the strawberries which were cultivated in the prelate's garden in Holborn, and requested that he would send him some. The poor bishop, overjoyed it would appear by this condescension, answered: "Gladly, my lord, would to God I had something better as ready to your pleasure," and forthwith dispatched a servant in all haste for the fruit.* Gloucester having conversed a short time with the lords, took leave, promising a speedy return. In little more than an hour afterwards he re-entered, but his mood was changed; his eyes glared, his brow was contracted into a dark frown, and biting his lips in apparently suppressed rage, he sat down in his chair. Those who were not apprized of the scheme in agitation, amazed and somewhat alarmed by the sudden alteration in the duke's aspect and demeanour towards them, looked at each other, and at him. He broke the silence by suddenly inquiring, what punishment those persons merited who were imagining and compassing his death. The lords astonished knew not what to answer, but Hastings, bolder and perhaps feeling more secure than the rest, exclaimed that they should be dealt with as traitors. Gloucester then darkly hinted the parties: "That sorceress my brother's

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* More.

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wife and other with her," and plucking up the sleeve which covered his left arm, continued: "Ye shall all see how that sorceress and that witch of her council Shore's wife, have by their practices wasted my body." The limb was lean and withered, but knowing that it had been so dried up from his birth, the assembly immediately saw that he only wanted a pretence to quarrel with them.* Hastings, who since Edward's death had formed a connection with his favourite mistress, still undaunted, although the accusation which linked Jane Shore with the queen boded evil to him, answered: "Certainly, my lord, if they have so heinously done, they be worthy of heinous punishment."—"What," returned the protector, "dost thou answer me with ifs and ands? I tell thee they have done it, and that I will make good on thy body, traitor!" At these words he struck the table violently with his clenched hand (a preconcerted signal), some one without exclaimed, "Treason," the door was burst open and the chamber instantly filled with armed men. Gloucester arrested Hastings as a traitor, and commanding the seizure of his friends, one of the guard aimed a blow at Lord Stanley, who perceiving the weapon's approach, shrank from the stroke beneath the table, and thus escaped with a slighter wound than his assailant intended. He was conveyed away with the bishops to separate chambers, and Gloucester desiring his victim to hasten to confession, swore by St. Paul that he would not dine until his head was off. Deaf to all entreaty and remonstrance, the duke with barbarous impatience shortened the rite on which, ac-

* More.

cording to the belief of the Roman Catholic Church, the soul's welfare of Hastings must depend; the banquet waited, and for his oath's sake he would not join it until the executioner's bloody task had been accomplished. Upon this plea the unhappy object of his resentment was hurried out of the world. Hastings applied to the nearest priest, and ere he had time to number half his sins, the last sad scene commenced. The protector's minions conducted him to the green beside the chapel, and there being no time to prepare the scaffold and the block, they laid his head upon a log of timber which happened to be upon the spot for the repair of the building, and dealt the blow which stretched him a bleeding and mutilated corse upon the ground.*

Lord Hastings was one of the brightest stars of a court, which, whilst it retained all the vices, had lost the chivalric virtues of preceding times. Though he stooped to accept the bribes of the French king, he scorned the action too much to abase himself by its acknowledgment; absolutely refusing to follow the example of his less scrupulous companions, and to give a receipt for the money, his signature does not appear upon the archives which record the degrading submission of other lords. Handsome, graceful, and well bred, he stood very high in the favour of Edward IV. and partaking in the monarch's profligate amusements, incurred the queen's hatred, who although she forbore to notice her husband's gallantries detested the man whom she suspected of encouraging him in his licentious pursuits. Few nobles shone with greater

* Dugdale.

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splendour than Hastings, or possessed the art of attaching friends in a higher degree. In the expedition to France, whose results were so contrary to the general anticipation, he was looked up to as a warrior of great promise, and a gallant company of noble knights and gentlemen volunteered to serve under his banners, "to aid and succour him so far forth as law, equity, and conscience required."* Sir Thomas More designates him as a loving man, and passing well beloved, and Gloucester it is said by the same author, was attached to him, and loath to lose him. Faithful under every circumstance to his royal master, he fled with him in his distress to Holland, shared with him the perils which attended his return to England, fought by his side at the Battles of Barnet and Tewkesbury, and now died in the cause of his persecuted children, whom the protector dared not ask him to abandon.

When Gloucester rose from dinner he sent for the principal citizens, and appeared before them with Buckingham, both arrayed in rusty armour, such as Sir Thomas More informs us, "no man would wean that they would have vouchsafed to put upon

* Dugdale has preserved a list of the names of such persons as by indenture "of their own free wills and mere motions covenanted and belafte and faithfully promised to aid and assist the Right Honourable William Lord Hastings, and his part to take against all persons within this realm of England during their lives as well in peace as war, their allegiance to the king's majesty, his heirs and successors onely reserved and excepted, with so many able persons as every of them might well make to be furnished and arrayed at the costs and charges of the said lord. For the which the said lord promised them to be their good and true lord in all things reasonable, and them to aid and succour in all their rightful causes so far forth as law, equity and conscience required, *Anno Edwardi Quarti decimo quarto.*" In all, two lords, nine knights, fifty-eight esquires and twenty gentlemen.

their backs, except some sodaine necessity had constrained them." CHAP. IX.

In this strange guise they affirmed to their astonished auditors that Hastings and others, compassing together, had intended their destruction on that very day in the council, and receiving notice of the plot so late as ten o'clock, they were obliged to arm themselves with such harness as came to hand, "and so by the help of God," the evil had turned upon the inventors.* Gloucester having finished his explanation, desired the citizens to report a similar statement of facts to satisfy the minds of the people, and immediately afterwards he caused a herald to issue a proclamation throughout the city, declaring that "the Lord Hastings, with divers others of his traitorous purpose, had before conspired the same day to have slain the Lord Protector and the Duke of Buckingham, sitting in the council, and after to have taken upon them to rule the king and the realm at their pleasure, and thereby to pillage and spoil whom they list uncontrouled." Then followed in the same document scandalous animadversions on the late chamberlain's character and conduct; he was held up to detestation as an evil counsellor to Edward IV. as "enticing him to many things highlye redounding to the minishing of his honour, and to the universal hurt of the realm, by his evil company, sinister procuring, and ungracious example." And lastly, the dissolute life which he led in his connection with Shore's wife furnished subject for bitter comment.

The elegance of the writing of this laboured

* More.

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composition, which was fairly engrossed upon parchment, without the omission of a single ornament, and bore no marks of being struck hastily off at a moment's notice, created a suspicion that it was not, as it purported to be, an account drawn up subsequently to the death of Hastings, but a well digested narrative prepared at leisure previous to the events which it professed to commemorate. The bystanders could not fail to remark the discrepancies of the statement; the master of St. Paul's School observed to a merchant,

"Here is a gay goodly cast,
Fowle cast away for hast."*

his friend shrewdly replied, that "it was written by prophecy."

* More.

CHAPTER X.

Prosecution of Jane Shore—her Penance—and Demeanour—Letter from the Protector—Imprisonment of the Bishops—Morton is removed to Ely—Stanley's Liberation—The Duke of York delivered up into the Protector's hands—and committed to the Tower—Corruption of the Nobility—Richard openly pretends to the Crown—Execution of Rivers, Vaughan and Grey—Piety of Rivers—Reports concerning the Legitimacy of Edward's Children—Sermon at Paul's Cross—Blunder of the Preacher—Richard's Disappointment—Tame Submission of the People—Buckingham's Address to the Citizens—Deputations from the City—The Crown is offered to Richard—and is graciously accepted—Richard repairs to Westminster—and afterwards to St. Paul's—Enmity of Stillington to Edward's Family—Concurrence of the Nobles in Richard's Schemes—Arrival of Soldiers from the North—Creation of Knights of the Bath—Release of Lord Stanley and the Archbishop of York—Imputations against Stanley—Richard's Son created Prince of Wales—Procession through London—Coronation of the new King—Examination of the Wardrobe Roll—Traits in Richard's Character—The Northern Soldiers return Home—Richard's Expectations—Murmurs of the People—Plans in Favour of Edward's Children—Buckingham's Disaffection—the supposed Cause—Parallel between him and the King-maker—his Unpopularity—Death of the Young Princes—Grief of the Nation—Despair of the Queen—Reports of the Time—More's Account of the Murder—Buckingham's brief Hopes—his Determination in Favour of Henry Tudor—Advice of Morton—Escape of the Prelate—Correspondence between the Countess of Richmond and Edward's Queen—The People prepare to take up Arms—Buckingham is summoned to Court—his Answer—Richard's Nego-

ciations with Bretagne—his Proclamation—Buckingham's Revolt—his disastrous March—Dispersion of his Followers—his Concealment—Treachery of his Host—his Cowardice—Supposed Scheme of Revenge—the Duke's Execution—Grief of the Bishop of Salisbury—Calamities reported as occurring to Bannister.

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JANE SHORE was the next sufferer; but the charge of witchcraft and of treason was abandoned, and she was punished for an offence of which, if hitherto it had not been the fashion to take cognizance, was too open and notorious for denial. The protector, affecting the most scrupulous attention to decorum and morality, was scandalized by her unchastity; accordingly he confiscated the property which she had acquired at the expense of virtue, to the value of three thousand marks, and sanctified it by its transmission to his own coffers. The unfortunate woman was sent to prison and delivered over to the secular arm to endure the penance ordained by the church; and in thus compelling her to declare her shame in the eye of all the people, the duke loaded his brother's memory with the obloquy of her seduction, while he stood forward in stern integrity the relentless enemy of vice, "As if," observes Sir Thomas More, "sent out of heaven into this vicious world for the amendment of men's manners;" but the device did not appear to answer. Jane Shore submitted with such decent composure to the degrading ceremony, that she excited more compassion than scorn. Holding a taper in her hand, she was obliged to walk before the cross in sad procession through the streets upon a Sunday. Sir Thomas More, in his interesting history, has preserved a description of this luckless creature's person,

character and conduct, which is too admirably written to be withheld. "In which (her penance) she went in countenance and pace demure so womanly, and albeit she were out of all array save her kyrtle only; yet went she so fair and lovely, namely, while the wondering of the people caste a comely red in her cheeks, (of which she had most misse) that her great shame wan her much praise, and many good folk also that hated her living, and glad wer to see sin corrected, yet pitied thei more her penance than rejoiced therein, when they considered that the protector procured it more of a corrupt intent than any virtuous affection. This woman was born in London, worshipfully frended, honestly brought up, and very well maryed.* Proper she was and faire; nothing in her body that you wold have changed, but if you would have wished her somewhat higher. Thus say thei that knew her in her youthe. Albeit some that now see her (for yet she liveth) deem her never to have been well visaged; for now she is old, lean, withered and dried up, nothing left but rivilde skin and hard bone. And yet being even such, whoso well advise her visage might guess and devise which partes how filled wold make it a faire face. Yet delighted not men so much in her beauty as in her pleasant behaviour; for a proper wit had she, and could both read well and write, merry in company, ready and quick of answer, nither mute nor full of babble, sometime taunting without displeasure and not without disport. The king would say that he had three concubines, which in three divers

* Her husband was a silver-smith who dwelt in Lombard-street.—*City Leases.*

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properties diversly excelled: one the merriest, another the wiliest, the third the holiest courtezan in his realm. The other two were somewhat greater personages, and natheless of their humility content to be nameless, and to forbear the praise of those properties. But the meriest was this Shoris wife, in whom the king therefore took special pleasure. For many he had, but her he loved whose favour, to say the truth, (for sin it were to belie the devil) she never abused to any man's hurt, but to many a man's comfort and relief. Where the king took displeasure she would mitigate and appease his mind; where men were out of favour, she wold bring them in his grace. For many that had highly offended she obtained pardon. Of great forfeiture, she got men remission; and finally, in many weighty suits, she stood many men in great stead, either for none or very small rewards, and those rather gay than rich; either for that she was content with the deed itself well done, or for that she delighted to be sued unto, and to shew that she was able to do with the king. I doubt not some shall think this woman too slight a thing to be written of and set among the remembrances of great matters, which they shall specially think that happily shall esteem her only by what they now see her. But to me seemeth this chance so much the more worthy to be remembered, in how much she is now in the more beggarly condition, unfriended and worn out of acquaintance, after good substance, after as great favour with the prince, after as great suit and seeking to with all those that in those days had business to speed, as many other men were in their times, of which be

now famous only by the infamy of their ill deeds. Her doings were not much lesse, albeit they be muche less remembered because they were not so evil. For men use if they have an evil turne, to write it in marble; and whoso doth us a good turne we write it in dust, which is not worse proved by her; for at this day she beggeth of many at this day living, that at this day had begged if she had not been."

The author of the "Historic Doubts" has adduced a letter written by Richard after he became king, to shew that he was not the cruel persecutor of Jane that he has been represented by Sir Thomas More. This curious document, touching a conquest which she had made of the solicitor general, and addressed to the chancellor, runs thus:—

*"Right reverend fadre in God, &c. Signifying unto you that it is shewed unto us that our servant and solicitor, Thomas Lynom, merveillously blinded and abused with the late (wife) of Willm. Shore, now being in Ludgate by oure commandement, hath made contract of matrymony with her (as it was said), and intendith to our full grate merveile, to procede to th' effect of the same. We for many causes wold be sory that hee soo shulde be disposed. Pray you therefore to send for him, and in that ye goodly may exhorte and sture him to the contrarye. And if ye finde him utterly set for to marye hur, and noen otherwise will be advertised, then (if it may stande with the lawe of the churche) we be content (the tyme of marriage deferred to our comyng next to London), that upon sufficient surety found of her good abering, ye do send for hure

* Harleian MSS. No. 2378.

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keeper, and discharge him of our said commandment by warrant of these, committing hure to the rule and guiding of hure fadre, or any other by your discretion in the mene season. Given, &c.

"To the right reverend fadre in God, &c. the Bishop of Lincoln, our chancellour."

The permission which is here given for her marriage, proves only, that having plundered her of all her property, and to answer some private purpose, exposed her to public degradation, he was satisfied; and always fond of exhibiting himself in the world's eye, took the opportunity of displaying his character in an amiable point of view, a cheap clemency, and not too trifling for a man whose life was now spent in labouring with unceasing assiduity to obtain popularity. The noble and learned author of the "Doubts" also states it as his opinion, that Jane Shore suffered from the zeal of meddling churchmen; but the voluntary interference of the priesthood is contradicted by Richard's assertion, that she was in the prison of Ludgate by his commandment; the miserable manner in which she languished out an old age of poverty and distress, reduced to this state of abject misery by the rapacious hand of her royal persecutor, shews how little she was indebted to Richard's mercy; and as she was still alive in the time of Sir Thomas More, who by his own account had many opportunities of seeing and of conversing, if not with her, at least with her most intimate acquaintance, we may fairly presume that his version of her unhappy story is the most correct of the two.

The two prelates were detained in confinement,

but sustained no other inconvenience. Rotheram Archbishop of York soon weary of suffering in the cause of the oppressed, contrived to make his peace with the Duke of Gloucester. Upon the authority of Gough we learn, that meanly desiring to conciliate the tyrant, after his usurpation, he placed the boar, Richard's cognizance, over the gate of the public library at Cambridge.* The Bishop of Ely, Morton, who has been formerly mentioned, was too strongly attached to Edward's children to admit a hope of ever being made instrumental to their uncle's mischievous designs; he was placed in Brecon castle, a fortress under the command of the Duke of Buckingham, the constable, a selection intended to secure him from endangering the realm, but which ultimately proved the cause of the too cautious monarch's overthrow.

Stanley, whose whole life seems to have been spent in a dexterous evasion of the consequences of his temerity, was speedily released; and until the decisive measure which he adopted at Bosworth field, offered not the slightest opposition to Richard's ambitious schemes.

On the sixteenth of June, the Monday after the execution of Hastings, the protector, as the necessary prelude to his seizure of the crown, took possession of the person of the Duke of York. While this child remained in his mother's custody, the life, or even the right of his brother could scarcely have been in peril, for the boy would always have found partisans in the support of his claim against the usurpation of his uncle. At the head of a numerous

1483.

* Sepulchral Monuments.

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band, armed with clubs and swords, the duke surrounded the sanctuary, and sent the Archbishop of Canterbury to exert his eloquence in prevailing upon the queen to deliver up her son, being anxious if possible to avoid a recurrence to force, although it was obvious from his retinue, that if he could not succeed by more gentle means, he was ready to resort to the weapons of his followers. It required the magnanimous spirit of a Margaret of Anjou to meet the exigence of this dreadful moment, to repel the cruel spoiler, and to make a desperate stand in the righteous cause; that lion-hearted woman would have defended her offspring even unto death, her resistance, if it failed to save her son, would have covered Gloucester with the ignominy of an open violation of the sanctuary in the furtherance of his atrocious purpose; but Elizabeth, wavering in her resolutions, full of sorrow and distrust, unconvinced by the bishop's arguments, yet unwilling to provoke her brother-in-law by the declaration of her fears, reluctantly suffered the doomed infant to be taken from her arms, amidst caresses fraught with tears and anguish. Weak beyond the timidity of her sex, maternal affection could not exalt Elizabeth into a heroine; unpossessed even of "the tender fierceness of the dove," she yielded, and the tyrant clutched his prey. In excuse for this tame and fatal acquiescence, it may be said that although the queen's terrors might have suggested the criminal designs of Gloucester, a faint hope still remained to cheer her doubting spirit; his disloyalty at present was only the subject of suspicion. Rivers and Gray had not as yet perished by his command, and the death of

Hastings her mortal enemy was more calculated to excite a flattering belief that the duke would coalesce with her relations, than to inspire her with any fresh alarm. The unhappy prince, surrendered to the false prelate's specious oratory, was conducted to his brother in the Tower. The heart turns indignant from the base crew who were so easily incited to forsake these hapless children.* The archbishop, in his vile subservience to the royal traitor, pledged his body and soul for the safety of the infant whom he immediately afterwards abandoned, and threatened the queen if she refused compliance, to withdraw from the negociation, and leave it to others less devoted to her son's interests. The general corruption of the times is the best apology for Richard's actions; he was never at a loss for abettors in every outrage; temptations sprang up around him in the eager zeal of mercenary expectants, ready to sacrifice the best feelings of honour and humanity for the sake of worldly distinctions; and, Hastings and Rivers in the grave, not one faithful partisan was left to defend the cause of injured innocence amidst those who were strong enough to resist his will.

Gloucester had now little more to achieve ere he attained the coveted elevation to a throne; all the principal men were gained over to his party, and it was only necessary to practise a few arts upon the multitude, who, destitute of a leader, were easily cajoled by the representations of their superiors. Richard industriously circulated the report of dark plots which menaced him, his cousin the Duke of

* More.

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Buckingham, and all the old nobility of the land, by the queen and her kindred.

In addition to the pressing letter before mentioned borne to York by Sir Richard Radcliffe, a proclamation was issued requiring all manner of men to arm themselves in their best defensible array, and hasten, with all speed to London to aid his highness in his great necessity.* The life of Rivers was drawing to a close; previous to the march of the new levies to the metropolis, he, together with Vaughan and Gray, was arraigned before the Earl of Northumberland at Pontefract Castle, on the charge of contriving Richard's death. After the mockery of a trial, in which he was not allowed to speak in his defence, he received his sentence. The three prisoners were led out into the court-yard, proclaimed "traitors," and their heads were immediately struck off, Sir Richard Radcliffe presiding at the execution. Rivers and Gray, the latter a mere youth, met their fate in silence, Sir Thomas Vaughan, who had grown grey in the service of Edward, boldly vindicated himself and his companions from the malignant accusation which had been devised to sanction this judicial murder; on the scaffold he exclaimed: "I appeal to the high tribunal of God against the Duke of Gloucester, for this wrongful murder and our real innocence." The brutal Radcliffe replied: "You have made a goodly appeal, lay down your head."—"I," said the dauntless veteran, "die in the right cause, take heed you die not in the wrong," and bowing his head submitted to the stroke.

Strictly pious according to the notions of the faith

* Drake's Eborac.

which he professed, death revealed the mortifications which Rivers had imposed upon his body, either as a voluntary or as an enjoined penance. A hair shirt was found beneath his splendid garments, the secret remembrancer and avenger of his sins; it was afterwards hung as a relic before St. Mary's image at Doncaster.* He directed in his last will that his heart should be carried to the chapel of our Lady of Pisa, in Westminster, the place for which he had formerly purchased indulgences from the Pope, and in case he should die south of the Trent, he desired that his body also might be buried in this highly venerated spot. He bequeathed the principal part of his property to his brother, Sir Edward Wydeville, and ordered his wearing apparel and horse furniture to be sold, and the profits appropriated in the supply of garments for the poor.†

Whilst these transactions took place in the north, Gloucester's friends were busily employed in preparing the public to receive him as king. Doubts of the legality of the marriage of Edward IV. were loudly promulgated; the children were styled by a name which it was the custom to apply to royalty when it had fallen into contempt: and not satisfied with attacking the legitimacy of the young princes, some officious persons went farther, and branded Edward himself with the same opprobrious title which they had fastened upon his offspring.

The delicacy of the present age, shocked by the idea that Richard could permit such a gross calumny upon a parent, whose fame had hitherto been as spotless as her character was amiable, has rejected the

* Rous. † Dugdale.

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statement, more particularly as the visits of Richard to Baynard's Castle, the residence of the Duchess of York, prove that he was upon good terms with her at the time. But if we believe any part of Sir Thomas More's history, we must not permit the scruples of refinement to invalidate his testimony, when his assertions militate against modern feelings; so artful a man as Richard could find little difficulty in persuading his mother that he at least was innocent of an affront which he might easily have imputed to the vulgar clamour of the multitude in their determination to oppose Edward's children; and if we exonerate him from having devised the slander which touched one so well entitled to his most reverential regards, we may be allowed to suppose that he would not have been relentless in his anger against those eager friends, who in their anxiety to serve him had overstepped the bounds which he had prescribed.

It was usual for the most eminent ecclesiastics to preach every Sunday in the forenoon at Paul's Cross, a pulpit raised in an open space before the cathedral. "We hear," says Pennant, "of this cross being in use as early as the year 1259. It was used not only for the instruction of mankind, by the doctrine of the preacher, but for every purpose political or ecclesiastical: for giving force to oaths, for promulgating laws (or rather the royal pleasure), for the emission of papal bulls, for anathematizing sinners, for benediction, for exposing penitents under censure of the Church, for recantations, for the private ends of the ambitious, and for the defaming of those who had incurred the displeasure of crowned heads."

St. Paul's Cross was therefore a very convenient place for Richard's purpose; he had gained over the Lord Mayor, Sir Edmund Shaw, and the brother of this man; an eminent divine, undertook to recommend the protector to the multitude as the most fitting person to supersede the line of Edward, debased by an unlawful marriage. The text was selected with infinite care: "Bastard slips shall not strike deep root," and the preacher proceeded to shew, from various authorities, that though for a time the offspring of illegal connections might inherit estates and titles to which they had no right, yet that a Divine Providence, watchful over the concerns of this world, did not long permit the usurpation. He dilated upon the profligacy of Edward's life, his contempt of the sacred laws of the Church in contracting marriages whenever the objects of his seductive arts rejected less honourable proposals, and asserted that he had engaged himself in holy bonds with the widow of the Lord Boteler of Sudely, previous to his equally clandestine union with the Lady Elizabeth Gray; and therefore, though during his reign he had acknowledged the latter to be Queen of England, his mere authority could not set aside the law, which accorded the right to the first wife, and pronounced Elizabeth a concubine and her children illegitimate. The orator then directed the attention of his auditors to the total dissimilarity of features between Edward IV. and the Duke of York, which he said must be obvious to all those who had ever seen them, and took occasion from this total want of resemblance to infer the probability of the late king not being in reality the true heir; and then breaking

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forth into a sudden burst of enthusiasm, he exclaimed: "But the Lord Protector, that very noble prince, that special paterne of knightly prowes, as well in all princely behaviour as in the liniaments and favour of his visage, represents the verye face of the noble duke his father.* This is the father's own figure, this is his own countenance, the very print of his visage, the true undoubted image, the playne expresse likenes of that noble duke." At this critical juncture, when all eyes were prepared to assent to the suggestion, the protector had intended to appear, trusting that the people warmed by the eloquence of their teacher, would have caught a spark of his fire, and exclaimed with one voice "Long live King Richard," but this highly dramatic scene was totally ruined by the awkwardness of one of the performers. Dr. Shaw had arrived at the sentence which should have been followed by Richard's entrance, but he was not visible; the preacher somewhat disconcerted, went on with his address, and towards the conclusion, espying Gloucester in an opposite balcony, had the bad taste to repeat the panegyric. The duke came forward to receive the homage of the spectators—it was withheld; the people amazed and disgusted, saw through this pitiful device; each read his own thoughts in the countenance of his neighbour, and they gazed upon the intruder with a dogged silence highly disappointing to his ambitious hopes: he turned away in displeasure. Shaw hurried over the remainder of his sermon and stole to his own home, struck with sudden shame by the keen contempt of his auditors.

* More.

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Richard, who would willingly have made it appear that he had been invited to take possession of the throne by popular acclamation, was compelled to abandon the hope, and to be satisfied with the consent of a venal council. The silent expression of the people's disapprobation, though it might wound his pride could not divert him from his purpose; the insurrections of the commons had been always occasioned by private grievances, and if secure of the nobles he had little to apprehend from their interference, whilst their rights remained inviolate: a leader could make them formidable, and oppression would arouse them to rebellion, but in general they were content to follow the banners of their respective lords, and to fight either for the white or the red rose, as the wavering inclination of their feudal sovereign directed. The great body of the people readily submitted to any change of dynasty, and the conqueror, whether of the House of York or of Lancaster, when established on the throne by the nobles of the land, received the willing homage of the middling and lower classes; and unless, as in the case of Bolingbroke, when their own sufferings under an intolerable government spurred them to dethrone the despot Richard, it seems to have been rather difficult to inspire them with ardour in the cause of a struggling aspirant for the crown. Henry and Edward, at different periods of their stormy reigns, made appeals to public sympathy which were disregarded, the former was suffered in his deepest distress to ride through the crowded streets of the metropolis, and not a weapon flew out of its scabbard in his service. Margaret of Anjou more than

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once raised her banner in the north, and found it waving solitarily upon a deserted field; and the slender retinue which Edward brought with him from Holland, was not augmented by a single partizan until some of the great barons sanctioned his attempt.

Dr. Shaw having failed with the populace, it was resolved that the Duke of Buckingham should endeavour to procure a formal offer of the crown from the chief persons of the city. On the following Tuesday he repaired to the hustings at Guildhall, and in an energetic speech described Edward's tyranny, the poverty which he had entailed upon numerous families by the extortion of money under the form of a benevolence, his libertinism, and unlawful union with Elizabeth Gray; and having pressed the same points upon their attention which had been so vehemently urged in the foregoing sermon, added that the lords and commons of the northern counties had determined never to submit to the base rule of an illegitimate brood. The Duke of Buckingham's oratory was not more persuasive than that of Doctor Shaw; at the conclusion of his harangue an ominous silence prevailed, not a single murmur of applause greeted his expectant ears; but not easily daunted he returned again to the charge, and asked his auditors whether they would have Richard for their king. The duke's retainers and some idle persons had been stationed at the farther end of the hall, to increase the acclamations which it was presumed would follow Buckingham's encouraging speech: these men, undismayed by the cold disregard of the citizens, flung up their caps in the air, and raised a

feeble shout of "King Richard." The duke, eager to catch at the slightest token of approbation, returned thanks for the suffrages of the assembly, and the next day, attended by the mayor and aldermen, made his report to Gloucester, at Baynard's-castle. *This zealous friend respectfully represented the earnest desire of the spiritual and temporal lords, with the commons of the kingdom, who for the welfare of the realm, languishing in great misery from the misgovernment of the late monarch, entreated him to take the crown; since the pretended marriage of Edward with Elizabeth Gray being presumptuously made, without the assent of the nobles of the land, and contrived, according to common report, by the sorcery and witchcraft of the said Elizabeth and her mother, solemnized in a private chamber, without banns or any other ordinances of the church, was contrary to the law of God, and in consequence of the king's pre-contract with Dame Eleanor Boteler, daughter of the old Earl of Shrewsbury, utterly void and untenable; therefore as it followed that Edward's children were illegitimate, and the offspring of the Duke of Clarence barred from the succession by the attainder of their father, the three estates of the land humbly petitioned that his noble grace would take his true inheritance, the crown and royal dignity, with all things thereunto annexed and appertaining, to which he was called by just right and lawful election. Richard graciously acknowledged the truth of his claims, but begged to decline the intended honour, being as he assured them too unambitious to be

* Parliament Rolls.

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tempted by the splendours of royalty, and desirous only to preserve the crown for his nephews to whom he was tenderly attached. The exertion of Buckingham's eloquence successfully combatted this modest resolution, upon a threat that the free people of England, disdaining submission to Edward's base-born children, would seek some less scrupulous person to be their monarch. He hesitated no longer, and finally consented to take the gift at their hands.

1483. This solemn farce being enacted, Richard the next day repaired to Westminster, and taking his seat in the hall, with the Lord Howard on his right hand and the Duke of Suffolk on his left, addressed the assembly in a courteous speech, assuring them of his determination to preserve the laws and to consult their welfare and happiness throughout his reign. He proclaimed a pardon for all those who had injured him, sent for a man out of the sanctuary, wherein he had taken shelter from the fear of his vengeance, and when he appeared before him displayed the unbounded clemency of his disposition by dismissing the offender with kind expressions. Afterwards on his progress from Westminster to St. Paul's, he saluted every person on the way, and by this gracious condescension secured the acclamations of the gazing populace; the clergy met and conducted him to the cathedral in procession, and nothing more remained to invest him with the outward attributes of a king except his coronation.

The petition containing the offer of the crown which was presented to Richard at Baynard's castle, was drawn up by Stillington, Bishop of Bath, upon

whose sole evidence Edward's pre-contract with the Lady Boteler rested; the prelate had been imprisoned by the late monarch for some unrecorded offence, and burning under the recent infliction of an injury was ready to enter into the usurper's views; his uncorroborated testimony therefore must be received with great caution. Had any satisfactory proof existed of Edward's marriage, his brother would not have failed to have brought it forward: he was anxious to convince the people of the justice of his claim, and no one point being satisfactorily established, it follows that the whole story was made up for the purpose of affording a weak pretence to set aside the rightful heir.

The numerous party which Richard possessed in his favour prevented the necessity of a close investigation, except as the means of removing all doubt from the public mind; either the hope of personal advantage or the dread occasioned by the vengeance which had overtaken Rivers and Hastings, had bound the whole of the nobility, both spiritual and temporal, in servile chains; a general corruption of morals seems to have existed at this period which, while it reflects disgrace upon the age, renders the crimes of Richard less heinous. Only a few degrees worse than the companions who consented to and sanctioned his usurpation and bloodshed, he reaped the advantage of their unprincipled conduct; had the higher orders been less subservient, he must either have relinquished his hopes, or have incurred all the responsibility of the violent measures which obtained the crown; but the utter prostration of virtue at the shrine of avarice and ambition in the contaminated

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hearts with which he was surrounded, smoothed the path for his unrighteous exaltation. Scarcely a military retainer was called in to assist in effecting a revolution so fatal to the line of York. Previous to the new king's coronation, five thousand soldiers arrived in the metropolis from Wales and the north, but their appearance was more calculated to excite contempt than terror. Hall tells us, "they came up evil apparelled and worse harnessed, in rusty armour, neither defensible nor scoured to the sale, which
1483. mustered in Finsbury field to the great disdain of all the lookers on."

Conscious of the defect in his title, Richard strove to attract the friendly regards of the public by his
July 4. magnificence and his courtesy. Six days after his accession he visited the tower by water with his queen and son; on this occasion a proud regatta of gaily decorated barges wafted the royal freight over the broad surface of the river. The new king created seventeen knights of the Bath, and liberated the Archbishop of York and Lord Stanley from their imprisonment; the latter it is said owed his deliverance to the affectionate zeal of his son, Lord Strange, who on receiving intelligence of his father's perilous situation, raised his retainers in Lancashire, and Richard alarmed by a movement which might encourage other of his adversaries to take up arms, sought to engage Stanley in his interests; he gave him the appointment of Lord High Steward, a confidential post, which, notwithstanding his private sentiments, he was compelled to accept. Stanley's subsequent conduct has rendered him obnoxious to the charge of treachery, but unless he was prepared to

make what must be deemed a romantic sacrifice of his life, he had no choice; the refusal of so great an honour would have been nothing short of an open declaration of war; and though the exertions of his gallant son might have avenged his death, a prisoner in Richard's hands, immediate acquiescence could have alone relieved him from the surrounding danger. Induced by these personal considerations to enter the new king's service, the sacred nature of his engagements ought, it is said, to have secured Stanley's undeviating faith: it must however be admitted that Richard's fresh aggressions towards his brother's unhappy children was sufficient to exonerate those nobles from their oaths of allegiance, who, in assisting to place him on the throne did not contemplate the cruel act which followed. CHAP. X.

Richard on this day created his only child, a son ten years old, Prince of Wales, and rewarded Lord Howard for his iniquitous desertion of young Edward's cause with the dukedom of Norfolk. Francis Lord Lovel was raised to the rank of a viscount, and made lord chamberlain. July 4. 1483.

The next day the king again dazzled the eyes of the multitude with a splendid pageant, riding through the city in pomp which surpassed all former magnificence, and gratifying at once his own taste for the outward insignia of royalty and the vulgar appetite for gorgeous show.* The Duke of Buckingham outvied even his master in the sumptuousness of his appearance; glittering in radiant apparel, the trappings of his horse of blue velvet richly embroidered with burnished gold in imitation of the

* Grafton.

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axles of carriage wheels, was only prevented from sweeping on the ground by the attentive care of footmen who bore it on either side, a new device, which attracted the regards of the wondering by-standers.*

1483. The sixth of July, ten days after the deputation at Baynard's castle had prevailed upon him to assume the regal dignity, was appointed by Richard for his coronation; the preparations which had been long making at Westminster for the expected ceremony being only transferred to the uncle instead of gracing the nephew. The king with his usual attention to external pomp lavished immense sums upon this imposing exhibition. The whole of the nobility were summoned to support its splendour, and none disobeyed the sovereign's mandate. †In the morning Richard repaired to Westminster Hall, where he was received by the prelates mitred, and robed in the gorgeous costume which is permitted to the spiritual lords of the Roman Catholic church. ‡This august assemblage headed the procession to the abbey, the royal household followed, and immediately preceding the king came Stanley and Northumberland, the former bearing his constable's mace, the latter the emblem of mercy, a pointless sword. Richard, magnificently attired in a surcoat of purple velvet, and a train of the same rich material borne by the Duke of Buckingham, appeared under a splendid canopy, supported by the barons of the cinque ports, and surrounded by the great officers of state: he was attended on each side by a bishop, the Earl of Kent and Lord Lovel on the right and left carried a naked

* Hall. † Grafton. ‡ Hall.

sword, the symbol of justice, the Duke of Suffolk bore the sceptre, the Earl of Lincoln the ball and cross, the Earl of Surrey, son of the Duke of Norfolk, was charged with the sword of state, sheathed in a rich scabbard, and his father carried the glittering crown, which the exulting monarch had waded through a sea of blood to grasp. The queen with a retinue equally magnificent followed, apparelled also in purple velvet, her brows were encircled by a coronet richly set with pearls and other precious stones; she walked between two bishops, the Countess of Richmond bore her train, and her canopy was supported by peeresses. The Earl of Huntingdon bore her sceptre, the Viscount Lisle the rod of state, with its symbol of gentleness and peace, a dove, and the Earl of Wiltshire the crown. A brilliant train of noble ladies closed the sparkling procession. After the usual ceremonies of the mass, the sacrament, and the anointing, the king and queen exchanged their robes for others still more magnificent, and retired to their respective chambers. *The Duke of Norfolk as mareschal cleared the hall for the banquet, entering on horseback with his proud steed trapped to the ground with cloth of gold. The feast was served at four o'clock, and with the second course entered Sir Robert Dymock, the champion, who flinging his gauntlet on the floor offered to maintain the new king's right, in single combat against any adversary who should dispute his claim to the throne: a dead silence ensued, which was the next moment broken by the shouts of "King Richard!" which echoed and re-echoed

* Hall.

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through the hall, a burst of loyalty gratifying to every monarch, and which we may readily suppose was drank in by Richard's ears with greedy joy. The heralds proclaimed a largess, and the king and queen being presented by the lord mayor with sweet wine in a gold cup, the assembly was dismissed, each person we are told repairing at nightfall to his own home.*

Contemporary historians are silent respecting the appearance of young Edward at his uncle's coronation, a circumstance too singular and important to have passed without a comment. The noble author of the "Historic Doubts" has gravely stated it to be his opinion, that the imprisoned prince actually walked in the procession, drawing the inference from an entry in the wardrobe account, which he has styled a coronation roll. This record contains a description of royal attire said to have been delivered for the Lord Edward, son of the late King Edward IV.; splendid robes, in all probability originally intended for the ceremonial in which that ill-fated prince was expected to have performed the principal part, and entered together with many other articles not appertaining to Richard's coronation. The Duke of York's name is not mentioned in this document, who if his brother had attended as a peer in the train of his usurping uncle, would doubtless have accompanied him, and for whom habiliments equally splendid would have been provided. Magnificent preparations had been long making for a coronation, and Richard when he seized the crown had only to appropriate to himself

* Hall.

the paraphernalia intended to grace the celebration of his nephew's accession to the throne. The robes destined for young Edward became with the rest of the appendages of royalty the property of the new king; and the person engaged in drawing up the inventory, would of course be careful not to designate the young prince by any title which might give umbrage to his usurping uncle; he is therefore merely styled, "the Lord Edward, son of the late king."

The studious avoidance of every circumstance likely to bring the degraded offspring of his brother into notice, was the obvious policy of Richard; he had destined them to obscurity, and to drag forward a prince who until the last few days, had from the fall of the Lancastrian party, been considered the immediate heir of England, decorated with vain pomp, and assisting at the sacrifice of his own rights, would have been too impolitic, too dangerous, and too barbarous for that high-souled king, whose crimes resulted from his ambition alone, and were not the dark product of a heart delighting in acts of petty tyranny and wanton outrage. A strong motive swayed every deed of Richard's short yet eventful life; the lust of gold and of power tempted him to the most revolting and atrocious murders; he denied the friend he loved a moment's space to make his peace with God; he precipitated Rivers, Vaughan, and Gray at once into a blood-stained grave, and he scrupled not to employ the assassin's hand when the axe could not avail; but though his whole reign presents a dire spectacle of relentless cruelty, he was not a mean despot torturing without

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a purpose, and wounding only to enjoy his victim's agonies. Had he gained the throne by more righteous means, his government would have been popular and happy; but having commenced a career of guilt he could not pause, his own safety required a repetition of crime, and he pursued the dark path into which he had been irresistibly impelled by his first fatal deviation from virtue, until the accumulation of his evil deeds had entirely alienated every honest heart, and he became an object of detestation and horror.

Richard, after his coronation, dismissed the northern soldiers with rewards and thanks, and unsatiated with the parade of his newly-acquired honours, prepared to make progresses throughout the kingdom. The monarch had witnessed the effect produced in London by the imposing display of royal splendour. The same populace who had turned in sullen discontent from Dr. Shaw's laboured oration, filled the air with enthusiastic acclamations when Richard moved in state before them blazing with gold and jewels, and heading a brilliant cavalcade of gorgeous nobles; and he fondly trusted that the whole nation, dazzled by the pomp and splendour which beamed around him, and overpowered by his condescending affability, would regard him with reverential affection, and submit contentedly to his administration.

Richard, previous to his departure, took measures for the preservation of tranquillity in the metropolis; he surrounded the sanctuary at Westminster with a guard, and directed that no one should be admitted to visit the unfortunate inmates without his permission. He sent ambassadors to the principal states of

Europe, announcing his accession, and offering a continuation of the amity which had subsisted between England and her foreign neighbours in the time of his predecessors.

The Duke of Buckingham accompanied the king to Gloucester, the third town which received the honour of the royal visit. Here the friends separated; but whether from diminished attachment, or in consequence of the duke's presence being required elsewhere, is not known; only a few nobles remained about the king's person after his coronation; for according to the custom of the time the greater part repaired to their several counties; and of those who remained, we are told that Richard detained Stanley, not from any personal regard or confidence in his loyalty, but because he entertained a well-grounded apprehension that he was less affected to his interests than the other lords, and was therefore desirous to keep a watchful eye over his conduct.*

From Reading, the first place of his sojourn, which he reached on the twenty-third of July, Richard moved to Oxford, and was received with the distinguished honours which that courtly university has ever lavished on its royal guests. Thence the king proceeded to Gloucester, where the Duke of Buckingham took leave, loaded with the favours of a sovereign to whom he had given a crown, and against whom even now he was probably meditating evil. Historians have vainly conjectured the cause which disunited these once attached friends. From the enmity invariably springing up between the success-

* Hall.

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ful aspirant for a throne, and the potent noble who has been the principal instrument of his patron's elevation, it would appear that frail humanity is either incapable of gratitude or of moderation, or that the unholy league which has gained its object by bloodshed and violence is ever unprosperous, fraught with a thousand dangers from the caprice, the insolence, and the faithlessness of those who have quitted the strait path of integrity to embark upon a troubled sea: or it may be, that the fiery restlessness of an enterprising spirit, continually seeking some new field for its employment, cannot remain satisfied with the first trophies snatched from the brows of kings, Northumberland, Warwick, and Buckingham, the triumphant partizans of Henry IV., Edward IV., and Richard III., all perished in rebellion against the sovereign whom they had decked with a sceptre wrung from weaker hands.

From Gloucester Richard passed on to Tewkesbury, and thence to Warwick, in all places receiving the petitions of his subjects, attending to the administration of justice in person, and displaying the princely liberality of his disposition by showering favours as he passed along.

The queen and her son had joined him upon his journey, and their court was kept at Warwick with great pomp. Here Richard was gratified by the arrival of a splendid embassy from Spain. Isabella of Castile,* a princess to whom Edward IV. had been taught to direct his attention, was not ashamed to avow a woman's feeling, and to declare by Savola, her envoy, that her heart had been turned

Aug. 8. 1483.

* Harleian MSS.

from England by Edward's unkind refusal of the hand which he might have obtained. The King of France having broken four of the articles of the treaty which he had signed with Castile, she now offered, Edward being dead, to overlook the slight, and to join the English crown in a war for the recovery of its ancient possessions in France. Richard returned kind and gracious answers to the proposal, which he submitted to his council. The flattering message of Isabella was doubtless intended for the reigning monarch's deposed nephew, but the ambassador acquainted with the sentiments of his royal mistress did not scruple to pay homage to the sovereign in possession of the throne, and to permit the children of "the widow of England" preferred to the heiress of Castile, to sink into obscurity without remonstrance or remark.

Richard proceeded from Warwick to Coventry, and thence to Leicester, Pontefract, Nottingham and York. The people in all these places had been commanded to evince their joy at the honour conferred upon them "that the southern lords might mark the resayving of their graces." Particular directions were dispatched to York ordering the streets to be hung with tapestry, and suitable pageants prepared to greet the royal entry.* Richard determined to repeat in this favoured city the ceremonial of his coronation, for the gratification of a puerile vanity delighting in ostentatious exhibitions, and sent to London for robes suited to the occasion. The heart of the usurper must at this period have been a curious and an appalling spectacle; at one

1483.

* Drake's Eborac.

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moment filled with even more than woman's fondness for the paraphernalia of rank, directing with minute accuracy the keeper of his wardrobe to forward to him the splendid garments in which he was desirous to shine at York; in the next darkly meditating the slaughter of his defenceless nephews. The citizens of the capital of the north with whom, when Duke of Gloucester, he had ever been popular, obeyed the king's commands with gratifying promptitude. Theatrical representations were addressed to his eye, and the shouts of a loyal multitude rang continually upon his exulting ears. Charmed with his reception, Richard earnestly commended the affectionate solicitude of his faithful subjects, appearing among them decked in the coveted baubles which as mere external ornaments, were beneath his notice; he loved to press the crown he had won upon his brows, to grasp the sceptre in his hand, and thus adorned, receiving the homage which the millions pay to the glare and glitter of royalty, he felt that he was in truth a king. Richard's whole sojourn at York was a continual festival, he conferred the honour of knighthood on the Spanish ambassador, and ushered in his coronation with sumptuous banquets. The procession, a novelty in a provincial city, attracted and delighted the gazers' dazzled eyes. The king and queen blazing in their royal robes, each encircled with the regal diadem, and the latter leading her young son in her hand, bearing a golden rod, and his baby temples wreathed with a demy crown, presented a spectacle pictorial, magnificent, and deeply interesting. The rude multitude, accustomed only to the battle array and military pomp of

their sovereigns, hailed the approach of majesty surrounded by peaceful emblems, the white-robed priests, the stern warrior divested of his ponderous mail and led a willing captive in the train of beauty, with shouts of rapturous gratulation. Bright and evanescent was the season of Richard's prosperity; clouds were even now, though unseen, gathering in the distant horizon; the brilliant pageant faded away, and a dark and stormy sea appeared before him. The royal train left York about the middle of September, and proceeded slowly through Pontefract and Gainsborough to Lincoln, which it reached on the twelfth of October.

Richard's seizure of the crown had been effected with apparent ease; he had awed or bribed the nobles into forbearance; no hand was prepared to resist his usurpation, and when he burst upon the astonished nation as its king, it bowed down to pay him homage; but though submissive, the people were not satisfied, and men soon began to utter their discontent to each other. The situation of the young princes excited general commiseration; they were closely immured in the Tower, and though withdrawn from the public gaze, they were not forgotten; some bold spirits suggested the possibility of effecting their release, and secret meetings were held to consult upon the best method of befriending Edward's unfortunate children; those who deemed an attempt on the Tower too hazardous for the chance of success proposed that one or more of the princesses should be conveyed across the sea to some place of refuge, where, whatever Richard's future conduct might be with regard to their brothers, they would remain in safety,

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and ready at any advantageous opportunity to return and claim their inheritance.*

Intelligence of these conspiracies were speedily conveyed to Richard, he redoubled his vigilance, added to the precautions already taken to prevent all egress and regress to the sanctuary, entrenched it on all sides with military works, and by appointing men on whom he could depend to keep a strict watch over every avenue, he effectually annihilated the hopes entertained of stealing the unhappy inmates away from a place of such doubtful security. But though baffled, the partisans of injured innocence were not entirely depressed: a feeling which was shared by every heart awake to a sentiment of honour and humanity could not fail to increase; the spark was kindled in the metropolis, the neighbouring counties caught the generous flame, and it spread quickly towards the west. Richard probably contemplated a few tumultuary commotions as the result of these manifestations of popular discontent, but he was thunderstruck by a rumour which linked the name of Buckingham with treason.†

The duke had repaired from Gloucester to Brecon, the place which Richard with confiding friendship had selected for Morton's imprisonment. The prelate, warmly attached to Edward's children, content to suffer in their service, and viewing with unmitigated horror the unnatural conduct of their uncle, ventured to express the indignant feelings of his soul to the courteous noble who softened the rigours of confinement by admitting the reverend captive to the social intercourse of his table.

Buckingham's important services had been amply

* Croyland. † Ibid.

rewarded; in power, wealth and honours, he was second only to the king. The principal and perhaps the sole motive which had bound him to the cause of Richard was the expectation of obtaining from his gratitude an inheritance unjustly annexed by Edward IV. to the crown. The large estates of Humphrey de Bohun Earl of Hereford were destined to be the cause of discord fatal to the realm of England; the elder of his co-heiresses married Thomas of Woodstock Duke of Gloucester, and the successful manœuvring by which John of Ghent contrived to secure the younger for his own son, completely chilled the affection of these once attached brothers. Gloucester was compelled to divide the property with his nephew, the residue descended to his heiress the Lady Anne, who married Edmund Earl of Buckingham, the ancestor of the present duke, and upon the death of Prince Edward of Lancaster the last descendant of her aunt the wife of Henry IV. he became entitled to the estates of which that lady's marriage with Bolingbroke had deprived the Duke of Gloucester. Edward, tempted by the youth of the heir to withhold so valuable an inheritance, committed an act of injustice which entailed misery and destruction upon both his sons; they lost the crown of England and their own lives by their father's tyrannical appropriation of wealth belonging to another. The Duke of Buckingham, although married to one of the queen's sisters, opposed himself to the Wydevilles, advised their seizure, imprisonment, and death, employed his talents and his influence in Richard's service, and devoted the children of Edward to the deepest ignominy in the reckless pursuit of his dis-

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regarded claim. Richard immediately after his accession granted the whole of these estates to the Duke of Buckingham by his letters patent,* and nothing remained save the sanction of Parliament to complete the legal investiture which he had purchased at so high a price. Had Richard evinced the slightest hesitation upon a point which interested the duke so deeply, there would be no difficulty in accounting for the mutability of Buckingham's justly indignant heart. Sir Thomas More suggests that this concession was delayed, and circumstances might have arisen to inspire a doubt of the king's sincerity; but notwithstanding the dark mystery which envelops the sudden and unexpected change in the Duke's sentiments and conduct, the motives by which he was swayed may still be faintly traced. The chronicles of the time have preserved a trait in this nobleman's character which perhaps will justify a supposition that his avarice yielded to his vanity, and the acute Morton would not fail to mark the vulnerable weakness and to make a prompt advantage of the discovery. Buckingham, we are informed by Rous, boasted that he had as many liveries of Stafford knots as the great Earl of Warwick had of ragged staves. He probably assimilated himself with the king-maker in other particulars, and beguiled by the insidious eloquence of his shrewd prisoner, might be flattered into the hope of emulating the deeds of this illustrious prototype. Buckingham's passion for external pomp had induced him even to outshine the king in the splendour of his appointment; he loved to court the public eye, and was

* Harleian MSS.

perhaps not displeased to perceive a second opportunity of drawing the attention of the whole nation to his achievements. But if the number of Buckingham's retainers equalled those of Richard Neville, if his wealth was as great, and his ambition as unbounded, the points of the resemblance ended there: he did not possess the same art of attaching men to his service; and though in the struggle which he attempted the elements arose in warfare against him, they were not the sole cause of his overthrow. His soldiers, forced into his service, says Hall, "rather by lordly and streight commandment than by liberal wages and gentle demeanour," seized the first pretext to abandon him. Whatever might have been the duke's motive, whether vanity, constitutional fickleness, or resentful disappointment, he entered readily and heartily into Morton's views, and offering himself as the leader of the party who anxiously desired to place young Edward on his father's throne, he announced his intention in circular letters addressed to the heads of the confederacy.

The exulting hopes of the insurgents were suddenly damped by the melancholy assurance of the death of both the princes for whom they were prepared to risk their lives and fortunes. Richard, alarmed by the public excitation in favour of his devoted kinsmen, half revealed the tragic story of their fate; he caused intelligence of their decease to be communicated, leaving the amazed and shuddering world to conjecture the means by which the victims of an ambitious cruelty had been removed from a dangerous rivalship with their faithless

* Grafton.

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guardian. The blow fell with stunning violence; awakened from the first stupor of grief the people burst forth into wild lamentations, the voice of anguish was heard in the streets, and crowds assembled together in the most public places to mingle their tears.* The youth and innocence of the hapless sufferers inspired the deepest commiseration; no one hesitated to ascribe the sad catastrophe to the hand of violence; and boldly execrating a murder so foul, unnatural, and abhorrent to mankind, a cry arose to Heaven demanding vengeance for the blood of these slaughtered infants. The wretched mother was struck senseless to the earth by the direful tale; recovering to fresh agony she gave loose to the emotions of her tortured heart, in the frantic ravings of despair, lavishing the tenderest epithets of parental fondness on her murdered children, forgetful that a little dust was all that now remained of the cherished objects of her affection, who in the delirium of grief she fancied could hear and obey those gentle adjurations which in happier days had brought them to her arms; and then recalling with reproachful anguish her weak surrender of her youngest hope, bewailed the imprudent act with the bitterness of self-accusation, and falling on her knees, implored a righteous Providence to visit the treacherous author of her woes with its justly kindled wrath.†

Richard was unprepared for the torrent of public indignation which followed the intelligence of the death of his nephews; he had flattered himself that in publishing a circumstance so inimical to the hopes of the disaffected, he should paralyze the arm of

* Grafton. † Ibid.

rebellion; but there are few persons sufficiently hardened in crime to countenance assassination, and the brief and unsatisfactory account which the king deemed it expedient to give of this dark transaction left but one opinion of the nature of the calamity which had swept two imprisoned children into an untimely grave. The precise date of the decease of these unhappy captives, and the malady which had occasioned so unexpected a termination of their existence, were studiously concealed, and the deep mystery in which Richard's policy involved the whole affair, together with the bold assumption of the character of the younger prince by a daring adventurer, has occasioned the expression of a serious doubt whether Edward and his brother were in reality the victims of their uncle's tyranny. The statements preserved in the chronicles of the time are brief and meagre. Fabian informs us that "the common fame went that King Richard had within the tower put unto secret death the two sons of his brother." Rous observes that "it was afterwards known to very few by what death they suffered martyrdom," and the Croyland History, in mentioning the report, intimates a suspicion only, that they perished by violence. These contemporary writers were necessarily ignorant of the particulars of a crime which the perpetrators would not fail to guard with the most religious care; they transpired however in the next reign, according to the statement of Sir Thomas More, from the confession of Sir James Tyrrel, and Dighton, two men deeply implicated in this atrocious murder. The indefatigable labours of learned men anxiously

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seeking for truth, have fully established the authority of this calumniated historian, who assures us that he obtained the circumstances which he has transmitted to posterity relating to the dismal tragedy enacted in the tower, "by such men and such means as it were hard but it should be true."*

Richard was surrounded by a host of greedy dependants, enterprising men, gifted with courage and talents, and looking up to the successful usurper for honours and rewards, the ready tools of his ambition, eager to second him in every measure however dangerous or unprincipled, and rendering his crimes subservient to their own lofty aspirations. Brakenbury, Catesby, and Ratcliffe, were of this description, and others, less fortunate but equally daring, who beheld the elevation of their companions with envious eyes, were little scrupulous of the means which promised the attainment of similar distinctions.

Richard, enveloped in the gewgaw trappings of royalty, with the shouts of the coronation banquet still ringing in his ears, could not rest secure whilst his brother's children lived. During his journey to Gloucester he pondered darkly on the means of ridding himself of the objects of his secret fear, and for this purpose dispatched a trusty servant named John Green to Sir Robert Brakenbury, who had been appointed Constable of the Tower, with an earnest message of entreaty that he would destroy his helpless prisoners. The knight refused to take the responsibility of the deed upon himself, and

* More.

Green joined the king at Warwick, with the report of these unseasonable scruples.

Richard, compelled to hide his secret feelings from the multitude who thronged about him during the day, gave loose to the murmurs of disappointment when secure in the privacy of his chamber, passionately exclaiming, *" Ah! whome shall a man trust? thou that I have brought up myself, thou whome I thought would most surely serve me,' even thou fayle me, and at my commandement wyll do nothing for me." A page who caught the purport of this resentful speech, ventured to console his master with an assurance that he still possessed faithful servants, ready to administer to his wishes, of whatsoever nature they might be. " Sir," quoth he, " there lyeth one on your pallet without, that I dare well say would find it a hard thing which he would refuse, to do your grace pleasure." The person thus pointed out to the monarch's notice was Sir James Tyrrel, brother of the knight who had acted as Richard's master of the horse, at the late coronation, a follower of the court anxiously looking for promotion, and hitherto depressed by Ratcliffe and Catesby, who with selfish policy endeavoured to engross the whole of their master's favour. Richard, acquainted with the soaring spirit of his attendant, determined to put it to the proof, and going forth into the anti-chamber, where the two brothers were reposing together, he addressed them jocosely, " What, Sirs, are you a-bed so soon," and calling Sir James up drew him aside, and after a few interrogatories, finding him a willing instrument, revealed

* More.

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the black design of his troubled heart. The consent of this ruthless miscreant was easily obtained, the next day he proceeded to London, entrusted with a letter to Brakenbury, who in this important document was directed to deliver up the keys of the Tower to the bearer for one night. The constable, whose conscience was satisfied by the refusal to undertake a principal part in the foul deed, surrendered his trust, and by this disgraceful acquiescence became a passive agent in Richard's barbarity.

The luckless object of the usurper's jealousy had for some time entertained fears of the evil meditated against him. When informed of Richard's coronation, he sighed deeply and exclaimed, "Alas! I would that my uncle would let me have my life though I should lose my kingdom." His prophetic apprehensions were augmented by the deprivation of his customary attendants: closely imprisoned with his infant brother, and left entirely to the care of a brutal servant, acute beyond his years, he was aware that danger lurked behind these studied indignities: the buoyant spirit of childhood could not support him under the accumulated evils which he saw gathering fast around: utterly neglecting his personal appearance, he abandoned himself to despairing anguish, imparting to his less conscious brother the deep sorrow which oppressed his burthened heart.

Midnight was chosen as the most fitting period for the destruction of these helpless children; and Tyrrel selected his own groom, John Dighton, "a big, broad, square, strong knave," and Miles Forrest,

"a fellow fleshed in murder,"* for the actual perpetrators of the inhuman deed. They stole into the chamber of the sleeping princes, and stifled them as they lay in bed.

The foul act accomplished, they called their master into the apartment, and displayed the slaughtered victims lying naked and lifeless on the couch of death. Tyrrel directed that they should be buried immediately, deep in the ground at the stairs' foot, and then took horse to apprise the king of the prompt execution of his commands.

All those persons who were directly or indirectly concerned in this atrocious murder received the reward of their base hardihood from a hand liberal in its gifts. The grants are still extant which record the grateful monarch's ample acknowledgment of the services of Brakenbury, Tyrrel, Dighton, Forrest, and Green.

When Buckingham learned the death of Edward's children, a bright meteor flashed before his enchanted eyes: the crown of England seemed for a moment to invite his grasp. Descended from Thomas of Woodstock Duke of Gloucester, the youngest son of Edward III., had his influence borne any proportion to his ambition the defects in his title might have been overlooked; but the power of the nobility had received a check in the last reign, and a short consideration sufficed to convince him that the project was too chimerical for a chance of success; yet in advancing a single step against Richard, he had gone too far to recede. The jealousy of the king once awakened, though policy might induce

* More.

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him to dissemble in an hour of danger, would inevitably pursue and crush the opposer of his will, when the secure establishment of his throne should permit him to follow the dictates of a revengeful spirit. It therefore became necessary, upon the decease of the young princes, for the party who had meditated a revolt, to select a new candidate for the English throne. Buckingham, at the first glance, viewed his own pretensions with complacence; but the Duke of Gloucester, his maternal ancestor, was a younger brother of John of Ghent, and whilst a single descendant remained of the house of Lancaster, the faction, who had shed a deluge of blood in the cause of the red rose, would still cling with obstinate tenacity to the last of its enfeebled race.

Buckingham was reminded of the existence of a nobleman whose claims would be more favourably regarded by the friends of Henry VI. than any which he could hope to advance, in an accidental meeting upon the road between Worcester and Bridgenorth with the Countess of Richmond. This lady, though apparently wholly devoted to the interests of piety and pursuits adapted to her sex and rank, possessed a resolute spirit which fitted her to meet the vicissitudes of the times. Her prudence equalled her courage. She had repelled the wild zeal of Richmond's partizans at the period in which the house of York was fully established on the throne, under Edward IV., submitted to his brother's usurpation with cheerful compliance, repairing to London for the purpose of honouring the queen at her coronation, and had even condescended to flatter Richard by soliciting him to receive her son into

his grace and favour; yet when a brighter hope dawned, she suffered no feminine weakness to deter her from engaging deeply in the perilous enterprize which promised to give a kingdom to her exiled heir; and secured by her apparent frankness from suspicion, she became the medium of communication between the malecontents, negociating with the dowager queen until the king's tardy precautions put an end to their correspondence, too late to prevent the schemes of his enemies. Buckingham revolved the circumstances of the meeting in his anxious mind. In attempting to acquire the throne of England for himself, he saw that he must contend singly against the claims of both houses; for in the event of Richard's deposition, the daughters of Edward still lived to assert their rights, and the Lancastrian faction looked up to a nearer relative of their defeated monarch. While engaged in these reflections, the union of the long adverse roses, in the persons of the Earl of Richmond and the Princess Elizabeth, burst upon his imagination in all its dazzling splendour. He beheld at a glance the immense advantages which would accrue to a realm, distracted by its civil dissensions, from this auspicious alliance. The concentration of the rival parties, in a common cause against the usurper, was a circumstance of scarcely less moment in the present exigence; and communicating the suggestion to Morton in one of their social hours, the comprehensive mind of the prelate instantly grasped all the beneficial results of an undertaking fraught with innumerable blessings to the bleeding land.

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*The active bishop suggested the means of accomplishing the object of their mutual desire, by a correspondence with the Countess of Richmond through Reginald Bray, a gentleman in her service, with whom he was intimately acquainted, and whose wisdom and integrity admirably fitted him for so important a trust. A messenger was forthwith dispatched into Lancashire, with an invitation to this person to repair to the Duke of Buckingham's castle: he promptly obeyed the summons, and admitted into the presence of the confederates received a full disclosure of their favourable intentions towards the Earl of Richmond, which he was directed to communicate to the countess his mistress, and to assure her of the duke's determination to place her son upon the throne, if he would pledge himself to espouse the Princess Elizabeth immediately upon obtaining possession of the kingdom. Bray returned to the Countess of Richmond, who received his intelligence with grateful joy, and Morton somewhat suspicious it should appear of the duke's continuing stedfast in his purpose, asked leave to repair to his bishopric, urging as the motive the powerful influence which he possessed in the Isle of Ely, and the numerous friends whom his presence would assemble in aid of their cause. Buckingham without directly refusing permission framed a plausible excuse to detain his guest: this hesitation increased the prelate's fears, who in the event of the duke's mutability felt that he must become an inevitable sacrifice to the unreserved communication of his hostility to Richard. These considerations induced him to seize

* Grafton.

a favourable opportunity to make his escape; assuming a disguise he withdrew from the castle in the dead of the night, and reached Ely in safety, whence the assistance of faithful and liberal friends enabled him to pass into Flanders: a fortunate circumstance for Henry, who became thus secured of an intelligent and indefatigable ally. Buckingham was highly displeased by the abrupt departure of his prisoner, and it is said that the loss of so prudent a councillor involved the rash duke in many errors, and ultimately occasioned the ruin of his ill-conducted enterprize.

The consent of Edward's queen to the proposed arrangements being of vital consequence, the Countess of Richmond contrived to acquaint her with the design by means of her physician Dr. Lewis, who in his professional capacity was suffered without suspicion to penetrate into the inmost recesses of the guarded sanctuary, and imparting the glad tidings to its disconsolate inmate, received an assurance that all the late king's friends would join heartily in the cause of Henry, if he would engage by oath to share the crown with the eldest of the princesses.

Both the anxious mothers, with the characteristic ardour of their sex, laboured incessantly to promote the great object which they had in view. The wary, subtle, and daring Richard lost his crown through the weak devices of two feeble women, and whilst sitting in triumphant exultation on his blood-stained throne, his ruin was plotted in the narrow chambers of the neighbouring sanctuary. Elizabeth Gray informed her partizans of the design in favour of her eldest daughter, and procured a promise of

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their vigorous co-operation, and the Countess of Richmond having with extreme caution selected a gentleman named Conway, and a priest called Ursewick, for her confidents, sent them over with a large sum of money to her son in Bretagne.

In the mean time the tale circulated throughout the kingdom, whispered from ear to ear by the enemies of Richard's government. Intrepid spirits were warmed into action by the desire to avenge the murder of Edward's innocent children, and by the glorious hope of preventing the recurrence of those desolating wars which had arisen from a disputed succession: the more timorous were stimulated to take up arms by the fortunate conjunction of the names of Richmond and Buckingham; and numbers, induced by mere personal considerations, hatred to the reigning monarch, a restless love of change, and motives of interest or ambition, joined the confederacy.

The eighteenth of October was fixed for the period of Richmond's landing in England, and on the same day Buckingham engaged to appear in the field, the insurgents being prepared to rise simultaneously in all parts of the kingdom on this concerted signal of revolt. A design necessarily confided to so great a number of persons, and accompanied by so many active measures, could not long remain a secret from a vigilant prince. His Richard perceived that the ferment which agitated the public mind, instead of being calmed, was increased by the promulgation of the account of the death of Prince Edward and the Duke of York. A short period only of uncertainty ensued respecting the intention of the conspirators, before

his eyes were directed to Richmond. The tidings of Buckingham's perfidy came upon the king with stunning violence; scarcely able to credit the rumour which coupled disloyalty with the name of this cherished friend, he made trial of the duke's sentiments by sending him a gracious invitation to the court. Buckingham excused himself upon the plea of indisposition. The king's wavering suspicions were now confirmed, and he dispatched an authoritative mandate for his immediate attendance. The imperious noble boldly replied that he would not come to his mortal enemy, whom he neither loved nor favoured.* This answer was conclusive, and Richard, now fully aware that he must engage in open war with the revolted favourite, roused himself to meet the danger, and set every engine in motion to counteract the plans of his avowed and of his secret enemies. CHAP. X.

The information of the perils which menaced his throne reached the king during his progress through the north; he instantly sent to London to the Chancellor for the great seal, accompanying the order with a letter from his own hand, a transcript of his feelings towards Buckingham, which renders the document highly interesting. "We wolde most gladly ye came yourselff yf that ye may; and yf ye may not, we pray you not to fayle, but to accomplyshe, in al dyllygence, our sayde commandemente, to sende our seale incontinent upon the syght hereof, as we truste you, with such as ye truste, and the officers parteyning to attende with hyt; praying you to ascertayn us of your news ther. Here, loved be God, is

* Grafton.

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al wel, and trewly determyned; and for to resiste the malyse of hym that had best cause to be true, the Duc of Buckingham, the most untrew creature lyvynge, whom with God's grace we shall not be long til that we wyll be in that parties, and subdue his malys. We assure you, there never was falser traitor purveyde for, as this berrer, Gloucestre, shall show you."*

When Richard ascertained that the Earl of Richmond had been chosen as the leader of the malecontents, he prepared with his usual energy to make a struggle for the crown; shortly after his coronation he had despatched an envoy to Bretagne, to reconnoitre the movements of a court which had given shelter to Sir Edward Wydeville the queen's brother, and some of his followers: lulled into security by the tranquillity which prevailed in this suspected quarter, his watchfulness relaxed, and the Earl was upon the sea with fifteen ships, having on board five thousand soldiers enlisted in the provinces wherein he had sojourned ever since the decisive battle of Tewkesbury, before his enemy had received intelligence of his movements.

1483. The great seal was delivered to Richard at Grantham on the sixteenth of October; he had armed his retainers and raised a considerable force in the north; his next step was to proclaim Buckingham a traitor, and he then published a manifesto extolling his own government, the just administration of the laws, and the zealous regard of the interests of morality by which he was distinguished, and contrasting this transcendent purity with the cha-

* Kennet's History.

racter of his enemies, whom he branded with the most opprobrious epithets, he assured the people that in compassing the destruction of the throne they meditated "the letting of virtue and the damnable maintenance of vice."* He offered a pardon to all yeomen and commoners who had been deluded by the false representations of the insurgents, and menaced those who should continue to assist them with the penalty of treason, and concluded by offering a large reward for the apprehension of the principal movers of the rebellion. CHAP. X.

Fortune was unpropitious to the Duke of Buckingham's lofty assumption of the characteristics of his illustrious model, Richard Nevill, the king-maker; his arm was not destined to dethrone the monarch it had raised: followed more by fear than love, he had compelled a rude host of Welchmen into his service, and on the appointed day issued forth at their head; but however zealous and ardent in the cause which he had espoused, he failed to inspire confidence; many persons unfriendly to Richard could not believe in the sincerity of the motives which had impelled his sudden change of conduct, and very slightly esteemed by the higher orders, he experienced even at the outset of his enterprize distress and difficulty from the hostility of his neighbours. The duke unfurled his standard, but it was joined only by his own dependants; his kinsman Humphrey Stafford gave a mortal blow to the undertaking, by breaking down the bridges† and destroying the roads which led to England, and many of the passes were strictly guarded by the adherents of Thomas Vaughan, Oct. 1483.

* Rymer. † Croyle.

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who with a loyal zeal for Richard which did little honour to his feelings of filial piety, instead of rushing forward in the train of Buckingham to avenge the sacrifice of his father, murdered with Rivers and Gray at Pontefract, harassed the march of the insurgents, and urged them into by-paths which delayed and finally ruined the undertaking. Buckingham thus prevented from pursuing the direct road, led his forces through the Forest of Dean, intending to cross the Severn at Gloucester. The design was frustrated by a deluge of rain of ten days' continuance, which swelled the river until it overflowed its banks, and carried ruin and desolation into the circumjacent country; the rushing torrent presented an insurmountable barrier between the confederates. The Marquis of Dorset had raised his followers in Exeter, and other of the malecontents were ready to take up arms in different parts of the kingdom, but their union could not be effected in consequence of the impassable state of the river from a flood which was long afterwards remembered throughout the country by the name of the "Great water, or Buckingham's flood."* Compelled to remain inactive on the borders of the stream, the Welch soldiers, little inclined to the enterprize, melted away. The Duke vainly attempted to retain them in his service by promises of rewards and threats of punishment, they fell off daily in great numbers, and Buckingham was at length deserted by all except a few persons belonging to his household. In this distress, the country hostile, his soldiers treacherous, and a price set upon his head, Buckingham was reduced to seek

* Hall.

shelter under the roof of a servant named Banaster at Shrewsbury, in whose prudence and fidelity he placed a vain reliance. The incautious conduct of this man led to fatal results: considering the rank rather than the circumstances of his guest, he excited suspicion by furnishing his table with viands of a quality superior to his ordinary fare.* Watchful eyes were directed to his residence, and tempted to anticipate the detection which he dreaded by the large reward offered for Buckingham's apprehension, he basely betrayed the unfortunate nobleman to the sheriff of the county.

The proud duke, despoiled of those exterior marks of rank and riches in which like the ostentatious Richard he so much delighted, clad in a rusty black cloak, sought concealment throughout the day in a grove adjoining Banaster's house. In this disguise he was seized by an armed force, and conveyed to Salisbury, where the king was already stationed with his army. The vengeance of Richard fell swiftly on the prisoner's head; he had appointed a vice-constable to pass judgment upon all those who were taken in rebellion, without delay, trial, or appeal.† Pusillanimous in adversity, Buckingham shewed himself to be unworthy of deeds of high emprise; blackened with a dark stain of treachery towards his early friend, he descended into deeper perfidy in the vain hope of softening the monarch's inexorable heart, meanly betraying the names and purpose of his accomplices, thus involving many gallant knights and gentlemen in ruin by a base confession which availed him not. The king, panting for his

* Croyland. † Rymer.

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blood, would admit no plea in extenuation of his sentence; neither his former, nor his present services could divert the stern inflexibility of Richard's soul, and, deaf to the duke's eager solicitation to be admitted to a personal interview before his death, he condemned him with merciless precipitation to the block.*

It is said that Buckingham sought to obtain an audience with Richard in the hope of accomplishing a murderous revenge; armed with a concealed dagger he was prepared to spring upon the unguarded monarch in some unsuspected moment, and to bury the weapon in his heart; but Richard's unrelenting severity defeated this cold-blooded scheme of assassination, and Buckingham disappointed in the expectation of achieving his disgraceful purpose, suffered the punishment of treason in the market-place of Salisbury, upon a new scaffold erected expressly for the melancholy occasion: his head was struck off on the second of November, and immediately after the execution of his sentence, the dependants of Richard hurried with eager rapacity to take possession of the forfeited estates. Stanley was either rewarded for his loyalty, or bribed to secure equal forbearance in any future attempt by the castle of Kymbolton, assigned to him on the very day of Buckingham's death, and commissions were issued for the seizure and confiscation of the duke's property in the several counties wherein his rich manors lay scattered.†

Buckingham's ignominious death it is said proved fatal to Lionel Bishop of Salisbury, the brother of

* Hall. † Harleian MSS.

Edward's queen, and one of the last of the unfortunate race of Wydeville. The prelate was deeply interested in the welfare of Richard's unstable favourite in consequence of his marriage with a younger sister, and he was so strongly affected by the duke's execution which took place at the seat of his own bishopric that he did not long survive the tragic scene.*

According to the old chronicles, retributive justice overtook the faithless servant by whose cowardice or treachery the Duke of Buckingham was surrendered into Richard's hands. Hall relates the disasters which befel the traitor's family in the following words: "Whether this Banaster bewreyed the duke more for fear than covetousness many men do doubt; but sure it is that shortly after he had betrayed ye duke his master, his sonne and heyre waxed mad and so dyed in a bore's stye; his eldest daughter of excellent beautie was sodaynelie stryken with a foule leperye; his second sonne very meruelously deformed of his limmes and made decrepite; his younger sonne in a small puddel was strangled and drowned, and he being of extreme age arraigned and found gyltie of a murther and by his clergy saved. And as for his thousand pound kyng Richard gave him not one farthing, saying that he which would bevntrew to so good a master would be false to al other; howbeit some saie he had a smal office or a ferme to stoppe his mouth withal."

* Britton's Cathedral Antiquities.

CHAPTER XI.

Dispersion of Dorset's Followers—Execution of Sir Thomas St. Leger—Richmond appears upon the Coast—his Retreat to Bretagne—Proceedings of the Lancastrians—Henry Tudor's Oath—The Nobles swear Allegiance to Richmond—Negociations with the Duke of Bretagne—Subservience of Richard's Parliament—The Commons attainted—Richard's Severity—Courtesy shewn to the Countess of Richmond—Libellous Rhyme—Pomp of Richard's Court—Degradation of Elizabeth Wydeville—and of her Daughters—they accept Richard's offered Protection—The King's Oath—Elizabeth's Advice to her Son—Misconstruction of Richard's best Actions—his Designs upon Richmond's Person—Honourable Conduct of the Duke of Bretagne—Treachery of Landois—Richard's Councils are betrayed—Narrow Escape of Richmond—Obtains Protection from Charles VIII.—Conduct of Foreign Princes towards Richard—Henry Tudor's destitute Condition—his sanguine Hopes—he is joined by the Earl of Oxford—and other Knights—Richard's Preparations—The Nobles renew their Oaths of Allegiance—Death of the Prince of Wales—Anecdotes concerning him—Grief of the King and Queen—Choice of the Heir Presumptive—Imprisonment of Warwick—Elevation of the Earl of Lincoln—The Duke of Albany's Visit to England—Invasion of Scotland—Albany is defeated—his Death—Treaty with Scotland—Richard's Proclamation—Weakness of Henry Tudor's Claims—his Letter to his English Friends—Confirmation of the Death of the young Princes—Favours enjoyed by the Princess Elizabeth at Court—Reports of the old Writers—Richard's Exultation—Illness of the Queen—Letter attributed to the Princess Elizabeth—Death of Queen Anne—Remonstrances of Richard's Friends—Apparent Decline of Richmond's Hopes—Richard's Suspicion of the Stanleys—Motives of their Conduct—the

King endeavours to gain Dorset over—is prevented by the Vigilance of the Lancastrians—Richmond applies to his Welch Friends—Exhausted State of Richard's Finances—Offensive Means of raising Money.

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THE open revolt of the western counties under the Marquis of Dorset drew Richard into Devonshire. On the approach of his army, the insurgents despairing of effectual resistance betook themselves to flight, numbers rushed into sanctuary, and those who were sufficiently fortunate to gain the coast, flung themselves on board ship and made sail to Bretagne. Sir Thomas St. Leger fell into the conqueror's hands at Exeter; he had married Richard's sister, the wife of Thomas Holand, the last duke of that family, and neither the ties of consanguinity, the prayers of supplicating relatives, nor the more tempting offers of large sums of money could alter the fierce implacability which doomed him to instant death.* Others of the conspirators were executed at Guildford, and some of the servants of the king's household becoming obnoxious to suspicion shared the same fate.†

Richard hoped to annihilate the spirit of rebellion by these terrible examples; aware how widely disaffection to his government had spread, he enforced the sentence of the law upon convicted traitors with merciless rigour. Environed by treason, the sickening hearts of men revolting from him by thousands, a milder administration would in all probability have failed to attach a nation shocked and exasperated by the atrocity of the usurper's crimes, but the sanguinary executions which marked his bloodstained

* Croyland. † Grafton.

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reign, stamped his character with an indelible brand, and despite of all the laboured apologies of erudite sceptics, the epithet of tyrant will cling to Richard's name so long as the existence of England, as a kingdom, shall be remembered upon earth.

The inclemency of the weather, which had been so fatal to Buckingham's expedition, frustrated also the attempt of Richmond; his small fleet was dispersed by a violent storm, and the tempest tossed vessel in which he had embarked, divided from the rest of the convoy, was driven on the Dorsetshire coast. The adventurer as he drew near to Poole could see that the shore was occupied by armed men, and too wary to rush unadvisedly upon danger he sent a boat on shore to make inquiries concerning the nature of those preparations before he would venture to land. These troops stationed on a suspected point by Richard's vigilance, declared that they belonged to the Duke of Buckingham, and had been dispatched by him to receive his friends from Bretagne, and with this assurance invited the earl to land; but still distrustful, an assertion unaccompanied by farther proof of their sincerity could not impose upon the circumspect nobleman, he resolved to await the arrival of his fleet and sailed on to Plymouth, where the news of Buckingham's defeat and death being conveyed to him he hastened to return to his former place of refuge before the activity of his enemies had barred the passage across the sea.* All the fugitives met at Vannes, and mutually rejoicing in each other's safety, were not de-

* Croyland.

terred from meditating a future attempt by the failure of their most sanguine hopes. They assembled frequently in council to deliberate upon the means of accomplishing the dethronement of Richard in the union of the rival roses: and the preliminaries arranged, Henry Tudor on Christmas Day took a solemn oath, on the altar of the principal church, to marry the Princess Elizabeth upon the conquest of the kingdom, and received in return the homage of the exiled noblemen and their followers, amounting in all to five hundred persons, who acknowledged him as their king by a voluntary act of allegiance, as unexpected as it must have been gratifying to the banished heir of a decaying line.* CHAP. XI.

The confederates depended almost entirely upon the Duke of Bretagne for the equipment of their armament; they were ill provided with money, having exhausted nearly every resource in their late efforts, and Richmond pledging himself to repay the loan when he was established in England, prevailed upon the duke to promise a considerable supply of gold from his treasury. Encouraged by this favourable hope, the earl commenced his preparations, repairing the damage which his vessels had sustained in the recent storms, and fitting them out with arms, ammunition, and other warlike stores necessary for the success of the intended invasion.

Richard summoned a parliament on his return to the capital, and obtained from this obsequious assembly a full confirmation of his title to the throne, and an entire acquiescence in every measure which his policy or his revenge dictated against the hostile Nov. 1483.

* Grafton.

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faction. The petition which Buckingham had presented to the king, when protector, at Baynard's castle, received the sanction both of Lords and Commons; they entailed the crown on the Prince of Wales, and passed a sweeping bill of attainder almost unprecedented in its severity, the wide range embracing an immense multitude of persons, who though implicated in the late revolt might from the clemency extended by former sovereigns to the followers of rebellious nobles, have hoped for an entire remission of punishment, or escape by the payment of a fine. This arbitrary act fell heavily upon the middling classes; in addition to the Duke of Buckingham, and the Marquis of Dorset, three earls, of whom Richmond was one, and three prelates, were the only sufferers amid the higher ranks of the nobility, the nearly interminable catalogue being filled with the names of knights and gentlemen, forcibly driven from their estates, and thrown defenceless on the world by the rigid despot's persecuting enmity;* measures which, however in some degree justified by the act of rebellion, tended to increase the general indignation against a king who, acquiring the throne by a series of enormous crimes, had forgotten how to pardon the offences of less fortunate aggressors.

Richard enriched the crown revenues with a part of the forfeited estates, and divided the remainder amongst his northern partisans, who took possession of their new acquisitions, and settled on the soil by the king's command, a measure which Richard's jealousy had suggested, with a view to counteract

* Parliament Rolls.

the designs of the disaffected, by placing watchful eyes over them. The intruding strangers exercised their inquisitorial office with insolent brutality, and this repulsive system planted a deep hatred to the government, in the hearts of a people disdaining even in these days of doubtful freedom to bend tamely to the oppressive yoke of a suspicious tyrant.

Amid the general wreck of the fortunes of the conspirators the Countess of Richmond's wealth was spared; her name appeared on the list of attainted traitors, but in consequence of her husband's faithful services she was committed to his custody, and he was also allowed to retain possession of her estates during his life, the king contenting himself with the reversion: an act of clemency at which we are told "nothing men more mervayled at," and which was probably the result of fear rather than of a more noble sentiment. Where offenders depended for pardon solely upon the mercy of the sovereign, it was seldom if ever accorded. An unfortunate schoolmaster named Collingbourne, who had engaged in the rebellion, lost his life on account of a rhyme which tended to bring the character of the king and his chief ministers into disrepute: the injurious couplet ran thus—

> "The ratte, the cat, and Lovell our dogge,
> Rule all Englande under the hogge."

Meaning Ratcliffe, Catesby, and Lord Lovell, and the usurper himself under the similitude of his cognizance, the fierce and devouring boar with tusks streaming with infant blood.*

* Hall and More.

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For the present the fortunate dispersion of Richmond's fleet, the utter discomfiture of the formidable conspiracy under Buckingham and Dorset, and the terror of the subsequent confiscations and executions, had reduced the kingdom to complete subjection. Richard reigned triumphantly: Philip de Comines remarks, that "he lived in greater pride than any King of England did this hundred years;" but notwithstanding the powerful position attained by the late happy combination of events, he had learned to fear the apparently weak and defenceless females who were immured in deserted solitude in sanctuary. The marriage of Elizabeth Gray with Edward IV. had been pronounced null and void; by the authority of Richard, she was deprived of her rank, and the letters patent which secured her dower as queen of England were formally cancelled: the king having procured this decree by laying before his private council "instruments, authentic doctors, proctors, notaries of the law, with depositions of divers witnesses, testifying Edward's children to be bastards: which depositions," says the Duke of Buckingham, "I then thought to be as true as now I know them to be false and feigned, and testified by witnesses with rewards untruly suborned."* But thus degraded, styled only Elizabeth, late wife of John Gray, her children declared illegitimate, and utterly despoiled of the means of their support, she became an object of importance in Richard's eyes by the alarming scheme of a marriage between her eldest daughter and the aspiring Richmond. The king now anxious to conciliate his despised and injured enemy, sent

* Hall.

repeated messengers into the sanctuary, charged with assurances of his friendship; and entreaties that she would place entire confidence in his desire to make atonement for the past. The lively representations of the monarch's friends, the forlorn and desolate situation to which her family was reduced, and perhaps the anxious solicitations of her daughters, weary of a dismal confinement which might seem to their impatient imaginations to be without end, wrought upon the queen's vacillating mind: she doubted, hesitated, but was finally won to consent to a proposal which a more magnanimous woman would have rejected with scorn. Elizabeth, fitted only for the patient endurance of evil, was incapable of any splendid sacrifice; to outward appearance firmly established on a throne the king's offers were tempting: she had to choose between comparative prosperity under the protection of her direst enemy, the ferocious tyrant whose ruthless ambition had plunged her into the lowest extremity of wretchedness, and a dreary imprisonment cheered only by the remote hope of ultimate triumph: deeply pledged to Richmond and his friends, she suffered despair of his success to overcome her resolution, and instead of displaying the spirit of a high-souled queen disdaining to accept the most lavish bounty from a hand red with the blood of her nearest relations, stooped meanly to receive the proffered boon. The treaty was disgraceful to both parties; Elizabeth warned by former outrages to distrust Richard's protestations, refused to leave the sanctuary with her daughters until he had bound himself by solemn vows to abstain from those acts of violence towards them which his sanguinary cha-

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racter had rendered a too probable result; and Richard, deeply conscious of having afforded ample cause for the vigilant fears of maternal anxiety, condescended to remove those injurious suspicions of his honour by the required test. In the presence of the peers of the realm and of the city magistrates he took the following oath, which has been preserved amid the Harleian MSS.

Mar. 1. 1484.

"I Richard King of England, &c., in the presence of you my lords spiritual and temporal, and you mayor and aldermen of my city of London, promise and swear upon these Holy Evangelists of God by me personally touched, that if the daughters of dame Elizabeth Gray, late calling herself Queen of England; to wit Elizabeth, Cecill, Anne, Kattryn, and Brugget, will come out unto me out of the sanctuary of Westminster, and be mynded, ruled, and demeaned after me; then I shall see that they shall be in surety of their lives; and also not suffer any manner of hurt, by any manner, person or persons, to them or any of them in their bodies or persons, nor them nor any of them imprison within the Tower of London or any other prison. But that I shall put them in honest place of good name and fame, and them honestly and courteously shall see to be found and intreated: and to have all things requisite and necessary for their exhibition and finding as my kinswomen. And that I shall do marry such of them as now ben marriable to gentilmen born, and everich of them give in marriage lands and tenements to the yearly value of 200 marcs for the term of their lives."

Upon this public assurance, a pledge too solemn

even for Richard to violate, the queen and the princesses left their dignified retreat to grace the usurper's court: they were received with affectionate kindness by the exulting monarch and his consort, and conveyed to the royal palace, where pomp, splendour, and continual entertainments awaited them. Richard striving, possibly with unfeigned sincerity, to obliterate the remembrance of those crying wrongs which had placed them in abject dependance upon his bounty. The effort appears to have been successful; young hearts are easily softened by gentle endearments, and though taught to look upon their persecuting relative with horror, the contrast of his conduct towards them with the dark impression which their ductile minds had previously received, must have operated strongly in his favour with unpractised and inexperienced females, the eldest being only seventeen: and their mother, long harassed by the most agonizing inquietude seems to have preferred security under Richard's government to the renewal of an anxious and hazardous conflict for the recovery of the crown for her descendants. Thus reconciled to the fate decreed by her late deadly enemy, the dowager queen suffered herself to be prevailed upon to write to her son, the Marquis of Dorset, to announce the change in her sentiments and prospects, and to request that he would relinquish his present engagements with the Earl of Richmond, and accept the offered friendship of the King of England: a weak and unworthy concession of a craven spirit. If Elizabeth had forgiven the mortal foe of her house from an exalted sense of duty, in obedience to the dictates of the christian religion,

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the pious act would have entitled her to the veneration of posterity; but no worldly advantage ought to have weighed with her whilst the brand of illegitimacy was fastened on her living offspring, her own name disgraced and dishonoured, and whilst the cruel murders of her sons, the luckless Gray just springing into manhood, and the still dearer children of her royal lord, remained unexpiated and unatoned. It is difficult to imagine the possibility of forgetfulness of wrongs like these; the strong maternal affection which was ready to waive all personal consideration for the interests of five defenceless daughters, should have rejected the purchase of a few vain distinctions by the degrading sacrifice of the noblest feelings of the human heart.

Elizabeth's abandonment of Richmond's cause did not produce those auspicious consequences which the king had anticipated; and the appearance of his kinswomen at court failed also to awaken the popular applause it was intended to elicit. Richard had heaped obloquy upon the heads of his enemies, and in turn was now to suffer from calumnious representations. The flagrant crimes which had paved his crimson path to the throne, rendered men suspicious of some fell and sinister design in every future action of his short but eventful reign. It was in vain that with late repentance he strove to win the affection of his people by the most unabating attention to the honour and welfare of the nation at large, and the felicity of those individuals who happened to be placed under his paternal care: they ascribed the blackest motives to every measure emanating from a soul which was deemed to be in-

capable of a single virtuous feeling; and he became the victim, not as some writers have averred, of the malicious slanders of a hostile faction, but to the universal abhorrence excited by the foul murder of his nephews, and the inexorable temper which he had displayed in the late confiscations. The public mind was poisoned against him, and Richard vainly strove to stem the tide of popular opinion. He never obtained the slightest degree of credit for his most wise, beneficial, and gracious deeds. In acknowledging the excellence of the action itself, the world refused to attribute it to an honourable impulse: his tenderness was styled dissimulation; his regard for the exterior decencies of life, hypocrisy. The policy of his government was very generally admitted, yet his subjects revolted, shuddering from an administration which his character alone rendered odious. This perversion extended its baleful influence over every act and circumstance of his future life, and became at last a clinging curse which pursued and hurried him to the tomb, and darkened his memory with a stain which no specious attempts of a future age can ever obliterate or remove.

Richard having, as he trusted, succeeded in detaching the dowager queen from Richmond's interests, devoted his whole attention towards the exile's foreign asylum. The Duke of Bretagne's probity was unimpeachable; and whilst he retained the full possession of a vigorous intellect, he had nobly fulfilled the duties of his exalted station, never hesitating for an instant to prefer the right to the expedient in the midst of conflicting events and hazardous situations, in which a dereliction from the

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severe injunctions of unyielding integrity might have been susceptible of some slight degree of palliation. Although the duke's interests were diametrically opposed to those of his captive, no personal consideration, either of danger from the enmity of Edward IV. or of advantage from the tempting offers of his assistance against an enemy equally potent and insidious, Louis XI. could induce him to abandon the fugitive heir of Lancaster to the mercy of the rival house; and pledging his word that Richmond should not endanger the safety of Edward's crown, he strictly adhered to his engagements, acting under the most trying circumstances with an honourable impartiality, unhappily but too singular in an age of almost universal corruption. Richard, like his brother, would have vainly assailed the rectitude of the Duke of Bretagne; but the mind of Francis had been weakened by the influence of a debilitating disease.* Incapable of attending to public affairs, he had resigned the administration of the duchy to Peter Landois, his treasurer, an intriguing politician who, though formerly espousing Richard's cause with an upright zeal which did him honour, scrupled not when their interests clashed, to sacrifice the earl to his most inveterate enemy. The minister was involved in a maze of difficulties, and struggling to maintain his authority against the active hatred of the nobility of the province. Thus situated, the countenance and support of Richard was an object of vital importance. The failure of Henry Tudor's expedition augured ill for the event of any succeeding enterprize; and Landois, afraid to trust to the chances which might place this appa-

* Comines.

rently unfortunate adventurer upon the throne of England, deserted a failing cause, and entered with greedy avidity into the schemes of the reigning monarch. Richard held out strong inducements to his venal ally: in addition to large sums of money in presents to Landois, he promised to raise a thousand archers for the service of the duchy, to carry on the war against France; and in return for this essential aid, the treasurer engaged to deliver up his unsuspecting guest, who in fearless confidence in a government which had afforded him protection throughout the triumphant reign of Edward IV., was keeping his slender court at Vannes.* CHAP. XI.

Richmond was saved from inevitable ruin by a treachery, perchance as base as that which would have betrayed him into the usurper's hands. Richard nourished a traitor in his council; the important secret was divulged to the monarch's mortal enemy, Morton, who, accurately informed of the perilous nature of the negociations with Bretagne, sent a timely warning to the Earl of Richmond. Henry, with the cool promptitude which formed one of his most striking characteristics, instantly took measures to avert the threatening danger. He dispatched Ursewick, the priest, to Charles VIII., King of France, the son and successor of Louis XI., lately deceased, to request an asylum in his dominions; and without making a single confident, excepting his uncle, the Earl of Pembroke, effectually baffled the well-arranged plans of his enemies. The Duke of Bretagne's illness furnished a pretext for a visit of inquiry from the lords in Richmond's retinue. The

* Rymer.

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Earl dispatched them to the court of Francis, directing Pembroke to diverge from the road, and hasten to a town beyond the frontiers; and taking horse himself, attended only by five servants, for the alleged purpose of spending a few hours with an old friend in a neighbouring village, he made an unsuspected retreat from Vannes. At the distance of five miles from the town, Richmond turned into a sequestered wood, and changing his attire with one of his retinue, assumed the garb and the office of a page. Not trusting entirely to his disguise for security, he proceeded on his way with as much speed as prudence would admit, choosing the most unfrequented paths, and delaying for no other rest or refreshment than that which was absolutely necessary for the horses. These precautions ensured his safety: he escaped, though narrowly, from a hot pursuit, and reached Angiers, where Pembroke and the rest of his friends, now fully aware of his hazardous situation, received him with unfeigned joy. Vannes was filled with Englishmen, the followers of the fugitive lords, and four days elapsed before the townspeople discovered the Earl of Richmond's flight. The fact was ascertained by the arrival of a band of soldiers sent by the traitor Landois to cut off the Earl's retreat, and deliver him up to the expectant Richard. The whole party instantly scoured the roads in quest of their prey, and tracked his path with such keenness and celerity, that he had only passed the frontiers a single hour before he was overtaken by the fleet horses of his anxious enemies. The soil of France afforded protection to the hunted exile. The Bretons dared not

* Grafton. Pol. Virg.

commit an outrage on the dominions of Charles, and therefore permitted Richmond to proceed without molestation to Angiers.* At this town the Earl received an assurance of a safe asylum. The king's permission for his residence in France awaited his arrival, and he hastened to pay his respects to Charles in person at Langes on the Loire, to account for his abrupt departure from Bretagne, and to solicit assistance in his attempt upon the crown of England. Richmond experienced a kind reception at the French court. He accompanied the king to Montargis, and afterwards to Paris; but the friendship of Charles was limited to a few outward demonstrations of regard. He adopted the policy of his father, and refused to embroil himself in a foreign war for the furtherance of an enterprise which was too deeply tinged with romance to meet the sober views of a cold and cautious prince.

The tidings of young Edward's deposition had been received by Louis XI. with horror. Philip de Comines declares that the king, his master, "esteemed Richard a wicked and cruel tyrant, and would neither make an answer to his letters or give his messengers audience;" but on the former point he was misinformed. The French king's reply is still extant: it was brief and chilling, yet studiously polite, and denoted at once the sentiments which Louis entertained of his correspondent, and his anxiety to avoid an open rupture: "I have seen the letter you have written by your herald, Blanche Sanglier, and thank you for the tidings you have communicated; and if I can do you any service, I will do it with a very good heart, for I wish much

* Pol. Virg. Hall.

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to have your friendship. Adieu, my dear cousin."

The general doom overtook Louis XI. a short time after the dispatch of this letter; he died on the thirteenth of August, 1483. His son and successor, Charles VIII., regarded the usurper of the English crown with the same feelings; but equally destitute of the generous spirit which would have upheld a righteous cause against the whole power and authority of a monarch fully established on the throne, hesitated to afford the necessary aid, amusing Richmond with promises which he delayed to fulfil.

The treachery of Landois, though it had failed in accomplishing its primary object, multiplied the difficulties which already beset Henry Tudor's path. The earl in escaping into France preserved his liberty alone. The necessary equipments, prepared with so much care and expence during his residence at Vannes, were irrecoverably lost, and Richmond could no longer entertain a hope of receiving succour and assistance from the Duke of Bretagne. With returning convalescence Francis had disclaimed all participation in the base designs of his minister, and he gave the strongest assurance of his unblemished faith by his conduct towards the English gentlemen who still remained in the duchy; he supplied Sir Edward Wydeville† and others with money to enable them to join their leader; but perhaps conscious of inability in the present situation of his affairs and health, to reject the offered friendship of the King of England, he declined any farther interference in Richmond's cause, who was thus reduced to a state of dependence and uncertitude, if possible more forlorn than his former condition had been: his rival was active,

* Harleian MSS. † Hall.

vigilant, and triumphant, his avowed friends few and weak, and the monarch who protected him weighing with cautious coldness the probabilities of success, ere he advanced a single step in his service, seemed to threaten the death-blow to his hopes. Richmond's means appeared to be totally inadequate to the attainment of the splendid object which tempted his aspiring eyes, but he felt an internal conviction of success, which when unaccompanied by a rash disregard to prudential measures, is the best augury of a prosperous termination to the most hazardous enterprize. The countenance afforded by Charles VIII. although not attended by more efficient support was a circumstance highly favourable to the exile's daring project; Richmond was seen to enjoy the esteem and confidence of a powerful monarch, and those who were unacquainted with the French king's narrow calculating policy, drew happy omens from so fortunate an alliance.

Henry Tudor, during his residence in Paris received an unexpected accession of strength to his party, in the person of Vere, Earl of Oxford. This illustrious and enterprising nobleman had endured a tedious confinement of nearly twelve years continuance in the castle of Hammes; in the early part of his imprisonment his restless spirit suggested the hope of an escape; he made the attempt, and reached the ditch, but was pursued, overtaken, and again deprived of liberty. Throughout the whole of the reign of Edward IV. Sir James Blunt, the governor of the fortress, faithful to his master's interests watched closely over the determined Lancastrian committed to his charge; but not owing the same duty to the

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murderer of Edward's children, the eloquence of Oxford prevailed, and he gave the earl his freedom.* The emancipated prisoner hastened to offer his services to Richmond, who received this new friend with unalloyed delight: a recognition of the line of Tudor by the heads of the Lancastrian party was in itself an object of the deepest importance to Henry. The Earl of Oxford's rank, character, conduct, and military experience, and above all his long and rancorous hostility to the House of York, rendered him an acquisition of inestimable value.

Richmond now possessed two counsellors to whom he could without scruple reveal every thought and feeling of his singularly acute mind. From the fluctuating, apprehensive, and fickle tempers of others of his associates, he was compelled to disguise much of difficulty and danger, arising out of adverse circumstances, known or suspected by himself alone; nor was it safe even when the intrepidity of his auditor could not be questioned, to confide the plans and resources of his meditated invasion without a strong pledge of the impossibility of the betrayal of the secret to some subtle spy in Richard's interest; but Pembroke and Oxford were both exempt from the shadow of suspicion, and upon their talents, prudence, and integrity, the Earl of Richmond could rely with the most implicit confidence. The advantages accruing from De Vere's frank espousal of Henry Tudor's cause were soon apparent; he had brought Sir James Blunt, the late commander of his prison, in his train; by the secession of this gentleman the garrison of the

* Grafton. Hall.

Castle of Hammes declared for Richmond, and Sir John Fortescue, a knight employed in an honourable office at Calais, also joined the confederacy. The influence and example of two knights of unsullied reputation augmented Henry Tudor's ranks; but his expedition was still delayed by the dilatory and temporizing measures of Charles VIII. There did not at the present moment exist a hope sufficiently bright to warrant the hazard of embarking prematurely in so perilous an undertaking, and he remained at Paris, quiescent, but not inactive, earnestly endeavouring to animate the tardy movements of the French monarch, and watching the progress of affairs in England with intense anxiety. CHAP. XI.

In the interim Richard III. was strengthening himself at home; he attended diligently to the defence of the kingdom, he increased his navy by the purchase of Spanish vessels, provided extensive stores of ammunition, and rendered his artillery more formidable by the addition of new and various pieces of ordnance:* he commanded all persons throughout the realm between sixteen and sixty to take the oath of allegiance, and issued warrants for the enlistment of soldiers, mariners, and the followers of useful arts into his service. These and similar precautions seemed to make invasion utterly hopeless, and the king's unslumbering vigilance was incessantly at work to devise new measures for the security of his crown.† In February 1484 Richard assembled the chief noblemen and gentlemen of the kingdom, and obtained from them an oath of fidelity and adherence to his only child, Edward Prince of Wales, a vain precaution, useless as it regarded the Jan. 1484.

* Harleian MSS. † Croyle.

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frail dependance which his own conscience must have taught him could alone be placed upon the most solemn promises, though ratified at the altar, and rendered unavailing by the premature death of the object of his parental solicitude.* The young prince was attacked in the month of April, in the same year, with a mortal disease at Middleham Castle, which carried him with frightful rapidity to the grave; a happy circumstance for the innocent boy, who in all probability would have shared in the disastrous fortunes which befel every male descendant of the House of York, and who was now spared a participation in the retributive justice which shortly afterwards overtook the guilty ambition of his father. Under more felicitous circumstances the regrets of the historian would have followed the untimely decease of this fair child. The record which has been preserved of Richard's infant heir is slight yet interesting; we hear of him at the coronation at York, his baby brows wreathed with a demi-crown, and his small hand linked in that of the exulting mother, who led him with proud yet tender joy to the ceremonial which she fondly hoped would have given a sceptre to his grasp. Nursed in the lap of luxury and ease, the prince from his earliest days was surrounded by pomp and magnificence; the fondness of Richard for the shewy appendages of royalty extended to the appointments of his son; the graceful plume waved on his cap of state, his attire was rich and splendid, and his attendants numerous. We learn from a document amid the Harleian MSS. that the primmer of "my Lord Prince" was corded with black satin, and

* Croylé.

probably on account of his tender age a chariot was provided for his accommodation in travelling. The afflicting intelligence of their son's death reached the king and queen at Nottingham; they received it with frantic languish, and abandoning themselves to despair, mourned the irreparable loss with grief which verged upon delirium. Richard felt that his throne was weakened by this heavy and unexpected blow, and his foreboding spirit anticipated an evil even more severe than the deprivation of the cherished idol of his tenderest affections. The prospects of the bereaved and sorrowing mother were equally gloomy, the tie was snapped which had secured the warm attachment of her husband, and henceforth she was doomed to mourn over disappointed hopes and alienated regards. It was not long before these results became apparent, and the miserable queen, stricken by grief, or cut off by poison, soon followed her lamented offspring to the tomb. Richard, incessantly haunted by the name of Henry Tudor linked with deep laid conspiracies, shook off the weight of affliction which oppressed his soul, and starting from the benumbing influence of sorrow, applied himself again to public affairs. Eagerly desirous to raise up a rival to the menacing and hated Richmond, in the affections of the people, he named the Earl of Warwick, the son of his unfortunate brother the Duke of Clarence, as the presumptive heir to the crown,* an impolitic choice, formed without due consideration, and speedily revoked. If this luckless prince possessed any claim to the throne, it was superior to that of the reigning

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* Rous.

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monarch. Richard, almost instantly aware of the error which he had committed, removed this dangerous remembrancer from public view; he was consigned to close custody, and another of the king's nephews was exalted to this fatal pre-eminence. John Earl of Lincoln, the son of Richard's most beloved sister the Duchess of Suffolk, was declared the heir apparent, and the monarch farther evinced his affectionate regard for this favoured family by cementing a peace with Scotland by affiancing Anne De La Pole, sister of the young earl, to the eldest son of James III.*

New dissensions had speedily arisen between the King of Scotland and his rebellious kinsman. The Duke of Albany fled to England again for succour, but found his former friend the Duke of Gloucester too busily employed in wresting the crown from the brows of his nephew to assist him in a similar design against his brother. Obliged to remain passive for a time, he attached himself to Richard's court, and formed a part of the royal pageant at the northern coronation; but the fiery restlessness of Albany's perturbed soul could not long brook a life of sloth; he was joined by the exiled Earl of Douglas, and the confederates put themselves at the head of five hundred horse, chiefly composed of the lawless banditti infesting the English borders, and entered Scotland, arriving at Lochmaben on a fair day, the twenty-
1484. second of June. The traders resorting to the town upon this occasion were armed according to custom for the protection of their goods. The Lairds of Johnstone and Cockpool, assisted by other gen-

* Rymer. Rous.

tlemen who happened fortunately to be present, instantly prepared for resistance; they called upon the assembled crowd to oppose themselves to the enemies of their king, and rushing forward, bravely supported by these loyal men, fiercely encountered the invaders.* Both parties fought with desperate determination, and the conflict lasted for several hours before either gave way. Victory at length declared for the royalists; Douglas fell a prisoner into their hands, and Albany only escaped by the swiftness of his horse; he made a precipitate retreat into England, and being destitute of the means of renewing hostilities with his brother, shortly after the defeat of Lochmaben withdrew to France, where he was finally cut off by a fate in strict unison with the wild turbulence of his career, being killed in a tournament at the court of Charles VIII. The duke's departure and death left Richard at liberty to negociate with Scotland; the destructive warfare which his fleet had carried on against the commerce of the neighbouring realm rendered James anxious for peace; he made the first advances, and the English monarch feeling it to be his interest to lessen the number of his enemies, concluded an armistice for three years. One of the articles of the treaty stipulated that, "durynge the saide truce, none of bothe the princes aforsaide shall receave into his realme, territories, or dominions, any treytour or rebel of the other prynce, nor shall mainteyne, favoure, aide, or comforte any rebell or treytour which is already fled or hereafter shall flye into either of the said princes' dominions, nor there suffre him or theim to tarye or make their

* Buchanan.

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abode;" a necessary condition in consequence of the disturbed state of either kingdom.

Alarmed by the countenance afforded to Richmond by Charles VIII. Richard endeavoured to rouse the energies of the nation against their ancient enemies, and to identify the views of his rival with those of the King of France. In furtherance of this object he published a long and elaborate proclamation, distinguished by the vituperate abuse of others, and the fulsome praise of himself, which formed the principal features in every manifesto disseminated throughout the kingdom during his reign. In this particular Richard exhibited a striking contrast to the calm dignity with which his predecessor in usurpation, Henry IV. repelled the bold accusations of his numerous adversaries. The proclamation is too curious and characteristic to be withheld, it ran thus:

"Forasmuch as the King our Sovereign Lord hath certain knowledge that Piers Bishop of Exeter, Jasper Tudor son of Owen Tudor, calling himself Earl of Pembroke, John late Earl of Oxford, and Sir Edward Wodevile, with others diverse, his rebels and traitors, disabled and attainted by the authority of the High Court of Parliament, of whom many be known for open murderers, adulterers, and extortioners, contrary to the pleasure of God and against all truth, honour, and nature, have forsaken their natural country, taking them first to be under the obeysance of the Duke of Bretagne, and to him promised certain things, which by him and his council were thought things too greatly unnatural and abo-

† Hall. Fenn's Collection, vol. ii. p. 319.

minable for them to grant, observe, keep, and perform, and therefore the same utterly refused. CHAP. XI.

The said traitors seeing the said duke and his council would not aid nor succour them, nor follow their ways, privily departed out of his country into France, and there taking them to be under the king's ancient enemy, Charles, calling himself King of France, and to abuse and blind the commons of this said realm, the said rebels and traitors have chosen to be their captain one Henry Tudor, son of Edmund Tudor, son of Owen Tudor, which of his ambitious and insatiable covetousness encroacheth and usurpeth upon him the name and title of royal estate of this realm of England, whereunto he hath no manner of interest, right, title, nor colour, as every man well knoweth; for he is descended of bastard blood, both of father's side, and of mother's side; for the said Owen the grandfather was bastard born; and his mother was daughter unto John Duke of Somerset, son unto John Earl of Somerset, son unto Dame Catharine Swynford, and of them in double adultery gotten; whereby it evidently appeareth, that no title can nor may in him, which fully intendeth to enter this realm, proposing a conquest; and if he should atchieve his false intent and purpose, every man's life, livelihood, and goods, shall be in his hands, liberty, and disposition; whereby should ensue the disheriting and destruction of all the noble and worshipful blood of this realm for ever, and to the resistance and withstanding whereof every true and natural Englishman born, must lay to his hands for his own surety and weal.

"And to the intent that the said Henry Tudor

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might the rather atchieve his false intent and purpose by the aid, support and assistance of the king's ancient enemy of France, he hath covenanted and bargained with him and all the council of France, to give up and release in perpetuity all the right, title, and claim that the King of England have had and ought to have to the crown and realm of France, together with the duchies of Normandy, Anjou and Mayne, Gascoign and Guysnes, Cassel, and the towns of Calais, Guysnes, Hammes, with the marches appertaining to the same, and to dissever and exclude the arms of France out of the arms of England for ever.

"And in more proof and shewing of his said purpose of conquest, the said Henry Tudor hath given as well to divers of the said king's enemies, as to his said rebels and traitors, archbishopricks, bishopricks, and other dignities spiritual; and also the duchies, earldoms, baronies, and other possessions and inheritances of knights, esquires, gentlemen, and other of the king's true subjects within the realm; and intendeth also to change and subvert the laws of the same, and to introduce and establish new laws and ordinances amongst the king's said subjects.

"And over this, and besides the alienations of all the premises into the possession of the king's said ancient enemies, to the greatest annihilation, shame, and rebuke that ever might fall to this said land, the said Henry Tudor and others of the king's rebels and traitors aforesaid, have intended at their coming, if they may be of power, to do the most cruel murders, slaughters and robberies and disherisons that ever were seen in any Christian realm.

"For the which and other inestimable dangers to be eschewed, and to the intent that the king's said rebels, traitors and enemies may be utterly put from their said malicious and false purpose, and soon discomforted if they endeavour to land,

"The king our sovereign lord willeth, chargeth and commandeth all and every of the natural and true subjects of this his realm, to call the premises to their minds, and like good and true Englishmen to furnish themselves with all their powers for the defence of them, their wives, children, and goods and hereditaments, against the said malicious purposes and conspirators, which the said ancient enemies have made with the king's said rebels and traitors for the final destruction of this land as aforesaid.

"And our said sovereign lord, as a well-willed, diligent and courageous prince, will put his most royal person to all labour and pain necessary in this behalf, for the resistance and subduing of his said enemies, rebels and traitors, to the most comfort, weal and surety of all his true and faithful liegemen and subjects.

"And over this, our said sovereign lord willeth and commandeth all his said subjects to be ready in their most defensible array to do his highness service of war, when they, by open proclamation or otherwise, shall be commanded so to do, for resistance of the king's said rebels, traitors and enemies. And this under peril, &c.

"Witness myself, at Westminster, the twenty-third day of June, in the second year of our reign."

The virulent nature of public hatred towards

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Richard is strongly evinced by the countenance and support afforded to Henry Tudor, who, as the king truly and clearly states was absolutely destitute of every legal pretension to the crown. The act which had legitimated John Beaufort Earl of Somerset, Richmond's maternal ancestor, son of John of Ghent, by Catharine Swynford, in removing a part of the stain upon his birth declared both him and his posterity to be utterly incapable of succeeding to the throne; and even if this bar had not existed there were princes of the royal houses of Spain and Portugal of prior descent from John of Ghent, still living, to dispute the claim of a younger branch of the same family. But the friends of Edward's children, anxiously desirous to maintain the right of Elizabeth, now the deceased monarch's heir, coalesced with the adverse party, and for her sake extended their services to Henry Tudor. The Lancastrian faction vehemently supported the persecuted representative of that illustrious race for whom they had poured out their life blood in continual streams, and looked forward to the union of the two roses as the only peaceful termination of a strife which each party was still resolved to pursue until the rival house should be totally annihilated: and the common people, who beneath a monarch unstained with the crimes imputed to Richard, would have been indifferent respecting the triumph of either dynasty, were strongly interested in favour of a young, gallant, and virtuous nobleman, who offered himself as the avenger of those foul murders which had filled the whole community with indignation and horror.

Richard's vindictive proclamation provoked a

spirited letter from Henry Tudor, addressed to his friends and allies in England; the reply is brief, energetic, and conclusive. CHAP XI.

" Right trusty, worshipful, and honourable good friends and our allies.

" I greet ye well. Being given to understand your good devoirs, and intent to advance me to the furtherance of my rightful claim due and lineal inheritance of the crown, and for the just depriving of that homicide and unnatural tyrant, which now unjustly bears dominion over you, I give you to understand, that no christian heart can be more full of joy and gladness than the heart of me, your poor exiled friend; who will upon the instance of your sune advertising what power you will make ready, and what captains and leaders you get to conduct, be prepared to pass over the sea, with such force as my friends here are preparing for me; and if I have such good speed and success as I wish, according to your desire, I shall ever be most forward to remember, and wholly to requite this great and most loving kindnesss in my just quarrel.* " H. R."

It was at this juncture, when both the Yorkists and Lancastrians were conspiring to dethrone him, that Richard, had he been in reality guiltless of the murder of his nephews, would have brought forward satisfactory proof of their existence; there needed no other measure to defeat the plans of his enemies, the desertion of Richmond by all the adherents of the white rose would have been the natural consequence; and deprived of their support the earl must either have relinquished his design upon the crown,

* Harleian MSS.

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or perished in the attempt to wrest it from the victorious House of York. Richard maintained an inflexible silence upon a point so important both to his interests and to his honour, and this tacit confirmation of the worst fears cherished by the sorrowing friends of the devoted children, affords sufficient proof to confute the most specious writers who have advocated the monarch's innocence.

The death of Richard's son had raised the Princess Elizabeth to a still higher station in the realm than that which she had previously occupied. The king, according to the supposition of a very judicious writer, in all probability intended to form an alliance between his eldest niece and his heir; this hope being frustrated by the untimely death of the young prince, Richard's personal enemies did not scruple to aver that he meditated a divorce from his queen, either by legal measures or a darker purpose, in order to secure, by a union repulsive to every moral feeling of society, the hand of so dangerous a claimant to his brother's throne. The world drew inferences of this nature from the extraordinary marks of respect paid to the degraded daughter of Elizabeth Gray; she appeared at the court festivals which were given in celebration of the Christmas holidays, attired in costly robes, ostentatiously vying in regal magnificence with those worn by Richard's consort. The illness of the queen, which almost immediately ensued, strengthened these odious suspicions; the cause of an indisposition so opportune for the alleged desire of her husband, was attributed by some to excessive grief, occasioned by his neglect and unkindness, and by others to the more certain effects

of poison. The latter supposition seems to have had no foundation except the general inclination to charge Richard with the commission of a revolting crime, whenever it was possible to impute the occurrence of any event in accordance to his inclination or his interest to the hand of violence. For the former we have the authority of Hall, who states that the affections of the king were totally alienated from his wife; that his disgust and hatred broke out into bitter animadversions against her, and that his repining murmurs were confided to the ear of Archbishop Rotheram, not without a hope that he would report them to the queen and thereby increase the malady which already oppressed her. The historian adds, that when Anne, alarmed by these cruel tokens of the king's disregard, approached him sorrowing, he soothed her grief, and bidding her be of good cheer, offered gentle consolation in tender caresses and dissembling words: a refinement in delicacy or hypocrisy not analogous to his character, and at variance with the proposed end, which the ungenerous complaints he is said to have uttered was intended to produce. The Croyland Chronicle informs us that Richard withdrew from the society of his queen, but states this separation to have been the result and not the cause of her illness; and the duration of the disease which finally terminated her existence would have exonerated any other person from those injurious surmises which blackened the king's character; she lingered for nearly two months after her first attack, scarcely a sufficient period for the slow operation of pining grief, and too long for the impatient anxiety of a husband resorting to

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sinister means to procure the death of one who had outlived his affection. But Richard was now doomed to experience the fatal effects of the almost universal reprehension provoked by his open violation of every law of nature and morality held sacred by mankind. The gorgeous dress permitted to Elizabeth was a condemning circumstance, and followed by the illness of the queen, whose days the Archbishop Rotheram prophecied would be few, produced a strong sensation in the public mind.

Although Richard is allowed to have been at this time anxiously desirous to promote the welfare of the kingdom, and to remove by a just, lenient and gracious administration, the deep prejudice which existed against him, his sincerity was suspected, and the motives of his best and fairest actions invariably misconstrued. In relating a favourable change in the king's conduct, Grafton tells us, that Richard had begun "to counterfeit the ymage of a good and well-disposed person."

News was brought to Richard, while he was celebrating the feast of the Epiphany, of Henry Tudor's intended invasion early in the ensuing summer. In the centre of a magnificent court, surrounded by obsequious nobles bending in flattering homage to his will, and wearing on his brows the regal diadem, which he delighted to display full in the world's admiring gaze, the short-sighted monarch received the tidings with premature exultation, rejoicing in the prospect of giving battle to his adventurous enemy, and subduing by one decisive blow the alarming confederacy which, despite of a dauntless intrepidity of spirit inherent in the House of York, cast a

deep shadow round his throne. Tormented by vague fears, suspicious of his associates, and unacquainted with his rival's resources, he ardently longed for a conflict wherein his own strength, his fortune and his prowess would be brought in overwhelming force against the utmost efforts of the long-declining Lancastrians. It is not improbable that in the expectation of Richmond's attempt the king meditated the defeat of the invader's best hope by raising Elizabeth to the partnership of his throne. Some informality in his marriage with queen Anne is said to have existed; and the keen disappointment sustained by their now childless union offered other facilities for a divorce. Anne's dangerous illness prevented the necessity of applying to the church for a legal separation; and anticipating his freedom from matrimonial bonds, his daring temper suggested the revolting measure which would transmit the crown to the lineal descendant of Edward IV. The object of the monarch's unhallowed policy is not wholly free from the charge of having participated in this horrid expedient. On the authority of Buck, the zealous and somewhat indiscreet advocate of Richard, we are told that the Princess Elizabeth, dazzled by the splendour of a throne, entered with disgraceful eagerness into her uncle's views. The court physicians had declared their opinion, upon the queen's first seizure immediately after the Christmas holidays, that her sufferings must terminate by the middle of the following February. Elizabeth is represented by her accuser as anxiously watching for the desired event, and in support of this injurious charge he gives the substance of a letter alleged to have been

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written by the princess to the Duke of Norfolk, wherein after assuring him that "he was the man in whom she affied in respect of that love which her father ever bore him," and thanking him for all his former courtesies, she entreats his good offices as a mediator to the king in behalf of the marriage propounded between them, "who," says Buck, "as she writes was her only joy and maker in this world, and that she was his in heart and thought; withal insinuating that the better part of February was past, and that she feared the queen would never die. All these," continues the historian, "be her own words, written with her own hand, and this is the sum of her letter, which remains in the autograph or original draft under her own hand in the magnificent cabinet of Thomas Earl of Arundel and Surrey." If this account be true, neither the youth or the inexperience of Elizabeth can palliate the weakness and the vice which she so unblushingly manifested; but notwithstanding the author's startling assertions his evidence must be received with caution; the letter is no longer to be found, neither does Buck expressly aver that he had seen it, this important circumstance being only inferred; and neglecting to give an authenticated copy of a document which assails the reputation of a lady rendered illustrious by the virtues displayed throughout the remainder of her life, he is open to the just suspicion of either writing upon a mere report, or of inventing the tale to strengthen his laboured but inconclusive arguments in Richard's favour. This letter, so fatally dishonourable to the writer, if we believe it to be genuine, will exonerate Richard from proposing the

odious marriage with his niece. Elizabeth in declaring her ready concurrence in the measure entreats the Duke of Norfolk to exert his influence with her uncle in her behalf, thus inducing the supposition that the idea originated in a third party, by whose persuasions she hoped that the king would be guided. There are strong facts opposed to this view of the subject, yet it is the obvious tendency of Elizabeth's words, and the discrepancy of her solicitations for the interest of another with the statement contained in the chronicles of the time, will justify a jealous mistrust of a letter which bears so many marks of being wholly surreptitious. Elizabeth's request to the Duke of Norfolk must have arisen from doubt and diffidence of Richard's intentions towards her, although he had already scandalized the world by arraying her in the robes of a queen; and this hateful alliance which was happily prevented by the resolute interposition of the king's friends, is represented to have been the suggestion of those very men who, at the moment in which their royal master was at liberty to complete it, boldly and firmly avowed their hostile sentiments.

Queen Anne died on the sixth of March, 1485, and every voice was raised at once against a marriage which the whole nation contemplated with horror. Ratcliffe and Catesby zealously and successfully opposed themselves to a design which they knew would be fraught with ruin to the king, assuring him that should he persist in a project branded with universal reprehension, the portion of his subjects most strongly attached to his person, the men of the north, would inevitably rise in rebellion;

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and they farther besought him if he valued the security of his throne to give a solemn pledge to the people of his entire abandonment of a purpose which was too offensive to public feeling ever to be tolerated. The opinion of twelve doctors in theology was equally adverse; they ventured even to express a doubt of the pope's power to grant a legal dispensation, and Richard, warned of the insuperable difficulties which barred his hopes, was too prudent to brave the world's unmitigated censure; and a short time before Easter assembled the mayor and aldermen in the great hall of the Priory of St. John at Clerkenwell, and in their presence clearly and distinctly contradicted the invidious report which had been circulated throughout the kingdom.* This denial came too late to dispel the suspicions previously entertained; it was attributed to fear of the consequences of so bold a defiance of law and religion. Richard's subjects saw no merit in the sacrifice of the monarch's supposed wishes, and his not ungraceful deference to the national voice was termed hypocrisy, misinterpretations founded upon the low estimate which honest men had formed of his character upon the discovery of the tragic fate of Edward's children.

The affairs of Richmond could scarcely be said to prosper; many persons disaffected to Richard's government, crossed the sea to join his party, but their abandonment of their country augured ill for their power of giving him more effectual assistance than could be afforded by their own swords. A large proportion of the English gentlemen who were

* Croyland.

students at the University performed homage to the exile as their king, but the reduction of the castle of Hammes by the garrison of Calais, and the small hopes of assistance which the earl now ventured to entertain from Charles VIII. becoming publicly manifest, his chance of success appeared to diminish daily. Richard possessed a strong force which occupied the whole of the coast menaced by a French invasion; profound tranquillity reigned throughout England; the voice of rebellion had been hushed into silence, and no leader of eminence had as yet evinced a disposition to spirit the people to revolt in Henry Tudor's cause. Notwithstanding this apparent security a thousand apprehensions haunted Richard's doubting soul; his fears were naturally directed to Lord Stanley, whose close connection with Richmond's mother rendered him an object of distrust; but this wily nobleman contrived to baffle and elude suspicion with so much skill that his apparent frankness deceived a sagacious and a jealous monarch. Presuming upon the candour which had hitherto defied Richard's searching eye, he solicited permission to visit his country estates, an alarming hint at so critical a juncture. The king was embarrassed by this ill-timed request; unwilling either to betray his secret feelings or to place implicit confidence in a man who was exposed to such strong temptation to desert him, he hesitated, demurred, and adopted at last a middle course, giving the license which Stanley had desired, and detaining his son Lord Strange at court, as the hostage of his father's fidelity.

Richard's measures though politic were unfortu-

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tunate; on this occasion he was overreached by the superior subtlety of Stanley, whose deep duplicity has been the subject of severe censure; but it must be remembered that his life and his fortune were continually at stake; the slightest symptom of intended defalcation would have been followed by immediate ruin; and although it may be said that in striving to attach him to his service by repeated favours, Richard merited a grateful return, fidelity to the usurper would have been treason to Edward's children, and Stanley could not have rejected the offered bounty without infinite danger to himself. In his attendance upon the king's person he was the slave of circumstances; it was Richard's will, and he obeyed. By a disclosure of his secret wishes for the prosperous fortunes of Henry Tudor he would have made the sacrifice of his life upon the scaffold, by an act of uncalled for generosity too idly romantic to elicit praise; in yielding to the course of events he was enabled to strike the decisive blow which gave the crown of England to the rightful heir, Elizabeth of York. Stanley was entirely exempt from any participation in Richard's ambitious schemes; he did not, like others, serve and then betray, and if he owed the monarch's good opinion to the line of conduct which he pursued in Buckingham's rebellion, it must not be presumed that he disapproved of the attempt; it was the leader and not the cause whom he distrusted and neglected, and he was too wary to commit himself to the rash guidance of a man known to be equally weak and faithless. The enterprize failed by the duke's imprudence, and his baseness betrayed the associates of his treason; it was there-

fore only wise in Stanley to avoid the councils of one so little worthy of trust; yet although he may be fairly defended from the charge of treachery and ingratitude to Richard, it seems an aggravation of the monarch's tragic fate that he fell by the hostility of a nobleman whose life he had spared. The perpetration of another crime in the doom of Stanley might have secured Richard's throne; he withheld the uplifted axe, and perished in consequence of his clemency.

The king committed a fatal although a generous error in placing the slightest reliance upon Stanley, and his too anxious desire to deprive Richmond of a supporter produced equally disastrous effects. Exulting in the fall of Hammes, and informed of the inefficient assistance which Charles VIII. intended to give his exiled guest, Richard hoped to crush a failing cause by detaching the Marquis of Dorset from his rival's interest. The queen dowager, we are told,* shared in the general aversion to the proposed alliance between her brother-in-law and her daughter, but entirely hopeless of Henry Tudor's success, willingly complied with the monarch's instructions respecting her son: she wrote to Dorset, assuring him of Richard's affectionate regard for her family, and to request that he would hasten to England in the full confidence of the king's favour and friendship. The marquis, like his too servile mother, willing to overlook the deep injuries inflicted at Pontefract and at the Tower by Richard's murderous hand in the present hope of personal benefit, readily obeyed the summons, and quitted Paris clandestinely by night with the intention of returning to England.

* Hall.

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Richmond informed of Dorset's absence and design, became justly alarmed by a movement which menaced his cause with destruction; he made an earnest and prompt application to the French king, who gave orders for the arrest of the fugitive, who was detained at Compeigne, and sent back guarded to the capital. The danger of farther delay, thus forcibly manifested by the desertion of a confederate whose example might be followed by that of others, determined Richmond to make the bold and hazardous attempt which he had so long meditated. Compelled to depend entirely upon the power of the Lancastrians, he contemplated a matrimonial alliance with a Welch family; the hand of Elizabeth of York seemed from the new line of policy adopted by her relatives to be lost to him for ever, and he hoped to gain the assistance of Sir Walter Herbert, and through him that of the Earl of Northumberland, a connection by marriage of this potent knight, by offering to share his crown with Herbert's sister.*

Fortunately for Richmond the negociation was prevented by the difficulty of conveying letters through a country strictly guarded; the acceptance of the proposal would have involved the adventurer in a serious dilemma with his Welch friends. Uncertain of the nature of the reception which would greet him in England, destitute of a single pledge of friendship and assistance from the leading nobles of the realm, Henry Tudor, with an intrepid and dauntless courage, which could alone sustain him in so perilous an undertaking, mustered his slender force, and obtaining the loan of a sum of money suf-

* Hall.

ficient for his present purpose from Charles VIII., he left Dorset and Sir John Bourchier at the French court as hostages for the payment of the debt, and proceeded to Rouen, where he collected his friends, whilst a few vessels were preparing at Harfleur for the conveyance of the followers of his almost desperate enterprise.

Richard's costly precautions in the defence of his kingdom had drained the treasury; the crown revenues were inadequate to the support of his splendid household, his well-appointed army, and the maintenance of the numerous fortresses which his jealousy had garrisoned and equipped. Distressed for the necessary supply of money to carry on an expensive war, he was compelled to resort to a measure which he had abrogated and condemned. The extortion of grants from the people under the name of a benevolence had endangered the popularity of Edward IV., and this odious system offered a fair opportunity for Richard to animadvert upon the faults of his brother's government, and to conciliate the nation by annulling and denouncing a favourite plan of the late monarch as illegal, despotic, and unwarrantable; but when the crown was placed in jeopardy, Richard did not scruple to risk the forfeiture of public confidence by the revival of this hateful tax; he pledged his plate and jewels as a security for the payment of large loans, and finding the produce insufficient for the immense demands of a war establishment, replenished his exhausted coffers with gold wrung with difficulty from the unwilling hands of his murmuring subjects.* Richard's conduct upon this occasion

* Fabian.

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proved that no reliance could be placed upon his principles, he fell with every temptation, pursuing the right only so long as it was the expedient also; and by the ostentatious assumption of extraordinary merit in the performance of any equitable and popular act, he rendered his frequent derelictions from the strict laws of justice and morality more striking and conspicuous. The imposition of this burthen completed the national disgust; private property was no longer secure, and though the king would not permit the extortion to be called by its former name of benevolence, the people revived the same epithet with which it had been branded in Edward's time, and styled it a malevolence.* Loud and deep murmurs evinced the public disapprobation; the hearts of Richard's subjects became still farther estranged from his interests, and were either filled with active resentment or marked by careless indifference. A few, a very few personal friends clung to him to the last; and with the exception of this small and stedfast band, no class or portion of the community displayed the slightest token of the warm attachment which his struggling predecessors had so frequently experienced.

* Chronicles of Croyle.

CHAPTER XII.

Unfavourable Aspect of Richmond's Affairs—Perfidy of Richard's Confidents—Intelligence conveyed to Richmond—Secrecy of Richmond's Measures—Richard's foreboding Fears—Henry Tudor lands in Wales—he commences his March—Encounters many Difficulties—is joined by Ap Thomas—and the Earl of Shrewsbury—Richard prepares for Battle—Arrest of Lord Strange—Imprisonment of the Princess Elizabeth—Numbers flock to the King's Standard—Muster at Nottingham—Small Number of Richard's Friends—Norfolk's Zeal—Warning Rhyme—doubtful Conduct of the Stanleys—Richmond's Danger at Shrewsbury—is joined by two Knights—Wanders out of the Road—Interview with the Stanleys—Sir John Savage and others go over to the Lancastrians—Richard marches from Leicester—Disturbed State of the King's Mind—his Prophecy concerning himself—his fearful Dream—his Threats of Vengeance—Peril of Lord Strange—Richard takes the Command of the Army—Disposition of his Forces—his Address to the Soldiers—Disparity of Richmond's Numbers—The Stanleys remain neutral—Description of Richmond's Person—his Speech—Situation of the two Armies—Military Talents of the Earl of Oxford—Advantage gained by the Lancastrians—Richard's undaunted Courage—Defection of the Stanleys—Richard's last Charge—he is overpowered and slain—Desertion of the Nobles—Richmond's Gratitude to his Followers—he is crowned on the Field—Death of Richard's Friends—Single Combat between Hungerford and Brackenbury—and between Norfolk and Oxford—Anecdote of Byron and Clifton—and of Rhys Vychan—Escape of Lovel—Execution of Catesby—Insults offered to Richard's Corse—Henry's triumphant Entry into Leicester.

RICHMOND's prospects were still of a gloomy nature, his utmost force did not exceed two thousand

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ill-appointed men, and these he proposed to embark almost without a purpose; for the opposite coast was so strongly guarded by Richard that there appeared to be a very slight chance even of effecting a landing with so small a number. Lord Lovel was stationed at Southampton with a strong body of soldiers, and the king on learning intelligence of his enemy's hostile movements placed himself at Nottingham, a central point, prepared to rush upon the invaders before their English adherents could have time to join them.

Richard's plans were prudent, well arranged, and admirably fitted to meet the dangers of the impending crisis; but they were rendered unavailing by the treachery of his council. Considerable forces were raising in Wales for the ostensible purpose of repelling the Earl of Richmond's invasion, but national feeling was favourable to an adventurer born upon the soil, and bearing a distinguishing mark of his native land in a name bequeathed by an honourable ancestry.* Morgan Kidwelly, the king's attorney-general, although enjoying the lavish bounty of his trusting sovereign, exulted in the hope of placing Henry Tudor on the throne: vanity, combined with the more reprehensible qualities of a deceitful heart, induced him to betray the confidence so unworthily reposed in him, and he sent instructions to France which directed Richmond to make his attempt upon the Welch coast: the Earl by this important message also learned that his English par-

* Though Owen Tudor's claims to noble birth have been disputed, his marriage with Queen Catharine, and the high rank attained by his sons, gave him consequence with his countrymen, who favoured the pretensions advanced by Richmond to a descent from the native Princes of Wales.

tisans had successfully tampered with Sir Rice ap Thomas, a powerful captain, who with Sir John Savage, another of the king's commanders in Cheshire, would lead their respective forces to join his standard; and moreover that Reginald Bray had collected a sum of money for the support of the foreign soldiers on their march. Thus admonished, Richmond obeyed the mandate of his friend with delighted alacrity, and shaped his course towards the remote and unsuspected quarter which he had described as the most advantageous point for the commencement of the war.

Richmond's habitual caution and the vague nature of his plans previous to the adoption of Morgan Kidwelly's judicious advice, had completely baffled the untiring efforts of the king of England to penetrate his secret councils. Richard's spies never elicited intelligence of the slightest importance from the confederates; the trusted were too faithful, and their associates too ignorant to be ensnared by the subtle devices of their enemies; and the profound mystery which enveloped Richmond's intentions formed the earl's surest safeguard and thrilled even his gallant opponent's heart with dark apprehensions. Richard's invincible courage never shrank from open danger; but no man is proof against the peril which lurks unseen. The monarch's keen eye glanced vainly around in search of the spot whence the expected storm should arise, the thunderbolt was ready to fall he knew not where. The ground trembling beneath his feet indicated an approaching earthquake, but his erring steps without a guide might lead him to the brink of a yawning chasm. But

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though the doubt and uncertainty which veiled the projects of his adversary sometimes clouded Richard's sanguine spirit, hope and self-confidence soon returned, and he became impatient for the final struggle which he fondly trusted would ensure undisturbed tranquillity to the remainder of his reign.

1485. Richmond, attended by his slender armament, sailed from Harfleur on the first of August, and reached Milford Haven in seven days: he landed with the troops, which did not exceed two thousand men, at Dalle. On the ensuing day the earl entered Haverford West, where his reception from the eager enthusiasm of a warm hearted people delighted to greet a native prince was highly gratifying to the returning exile, who from the age of fifteen had lived as a proscribed and banished man.* Richmond had taken the inhabitants by surprise; no previous rumour announced his arrival; the rapidity of his march occasioned it to be proclaimed by his presence alone, and the burst of congratulation which followed his unexpected appearance sprang from the first impulse of affectionate zeal. The joy afforded by this rapturous welcome was speedily damped. Richmond heard that he had been deceived in the flattering assurance of friendship from the Welch chieftains, Ap Thomas and Savage, and that both were preparing to oppose him. Directing his march northwards to Cardigan, fresh intelligence of a similar disastrous import reached the invading army: it was reported that Sir Walter Herbert was mustering a large force at Carmarthen, with an equally hostile intent. Richmond depressed yet not dismayed, advanced with undaunted resolution; nothing could

* Croyland.

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be more forlorn than his situation, but whilst his followers surveyed the impending dangers with undisguised alarm, their failing courage was revived by the opportune arrival of two gentlemen, Richard Griffith and John Morgan, who, each attended by a few retainers, attached themselves with unhesitating frankness to Henry Tudor's thin ranks.* This acquisition though small was cheering, and Richmond, aware that every hope of success depended upon the celerity of his movements, pressed onwards with unslackening speed, impatiently desirous to join the Stanleys before his route could be tracked by Richard's inquiring eye. The earl sent out scouts to reconnoitre the designs of his supposed adversaries, and learned that Herbert and Ap Thomas were in harness ready to oppose his progress. This intelligence, so alarming at the outset of his enterprise, determined him to meet the conflict rather than retreat a single step; he therefore prepared to give battle to the enemy whensoever they should come up, and proceeded forwards, having first dispatched the most trusty messengers in his train with letters to the Lady Margaret his mother, to Lord Stanley and Sir William his brother, and to Sir Gilbert Talbot, uncle of the young Earl of Shrewsbury, acquainting them with his intention to cross the Severn at Shrewsbury, and thence to direct his march to London.† But though ready to encounter the utmost force which could be opposed against him, and to perish bravely in the unequal fight, Richmond, naturally anxious to secure the services of Ap Thomas at this important juncture, contrived to assure him that his assistance

* Hall. † Hall.

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should be rewarded by the appointment of chief governor of Wales. In the mean time the earl rapidly advanced into Shropshire, choosing his path through the wildest and least populous parts of the county, by desolate and unfrequented tracts. He was not suffered to penetrate the mountain passes unmolested, some of the posts being strongly guarded, but their defence offered only a slight obstacle to his swift and resolute career:* he surprised and vanquished all his opponents, and in the immediate neighbourhood of Shrewsbury was gladdened by the sight of a powerful reinforcement conducted to his standard by the man whose vacillating spirit had caused him serious alarm, Sir Rice ap Thomas. The knight was in command of "a goodly band of Welchmen," and together with their leader they took the oath of fealty and allegiance to Richmond as their king.

At Shrewsbury the earl received welcome answers to those letters which had apprized his friends of his landing, in which they gave exhilarating assurances of their readiness to engage in his cause. Confident in the promised support, he moved forwards with renewed alacrity to Newport, where he permitted his weary troops to repose for the night, pitching his camp on the side of a hill adjoining the town. The arrival of the whole power of the young Earl of Shrewsbury, amounting to two thousand men, under Sir Gilbert Talbot, before Richmond had retired to his soldier's couch, infused fresh vigour throughout the small army. The strength which they had gathered upon their hurried march afforded well-grounded hope of the success of an enterprise commenced under so many favourable auspices. On the

* Hall.

following morning the earl reached Stafford, where he resolved to await for farther intelligence and advice from the Stanleys.

Richard heard of the landing of his rival in Wales with so poor an attendance of foreign soldiers with contemptuous pleasure, and fearlessly relied upon his commanders in that part of the country to quench the flame ignited by so faint a spark. It was not long however that the proud monarch was thus suffered to deride the weakness of his adversary; surprised by the safety and celerity of Richmond's march, his apathy subsided; and when he learned that the invaders had been allowed to pass the Severn without encountering the hostile swords of Herbert and Ap Thomas, he sprang up with vigorous celerity from his dreaming trance to meet and repel the approaching danger, rejoicing that the fated hour was come.*

Without the waste of a single moment, Richard sent letters into every county burning with fiery impatience for the fight, and commanding the attendance of all persons who owed military service to the crown upon pain of incuring the heaviest penalties of treason; he sent to the Duke of Norfolk, the Earl of Surrey his son, and to the Earl of Northumberland, desiring them to collect their utmost forces, and directed Sir Robert Brackenbury to join him from the Tower, bringing Sir Thomas Bourchier and Sir Walter Hungerford in his train, two knights whose fidelity was strongly suspected.†

The king also summoned Lord Stanley to his court at Nottingham, but received an evasive answer, alleging illness as the excuse for his disobedience, and

* Hall. † Hall.

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at this moment the attempted flight of Lord Strange alarmed the quick-sighted jealousy of a discerning and suspicious monarch; the fugitive overtaken and secured, was subjected to a strict examination, and too cowardly or too weak to brave or to baffle the close inquiries of wiser men, he revealed the secret plans of the confederates and the deep implication of his father and his uncle in the invader's ambitious project. Richard spared his captive's forfeited life in the hope of preventing Stanley's defection by the peril of his son; but this nobleman had advanced a far to recede. The vengeance of the king, though it might be delayed to a more propitious moment, was certain; and aware that both himself and his heir had sinned beyond the reach of mercy from an unforgiving and vindictive heart, he did not falter in his resolve: yet anxious to take advantage of every chance which promised to delay the execution of Lord Strange, he forbore openly to join the standard of Richmond, thus artfully keeping the anxious monarch in suspence respecting his intended movements; and Richard, completely perplexed, delayed the impending stroke lest he should force Stanley by too rash an act of violence into the ranks of his opponent.

One of the king's earliest precautions, upon the news of Richmond's landing, was directed to the Princess Elizabeth; he caused her to be conveyed to the castle of Sheriff-hutton, where she shared in the sad captivity of her cousin, the young Earl of Warwick, jealously secluded from the world's gaze in the same fortress. The rightful heirs of the crown were thus detained in close imprisonment,

whilst two pretenders, neither of whom possessed the slightest legal claims, were preparing for the mortal conflict which would secure the long disputed kingdom to the usurping line of York, or the illegitimate branch of Lancaster.

Immense multitudes thronged to the standard of the king, but the principal portion were attracted more through fear than from affection, and formed a vast unwieldy body, destitute of the animating influence of a soul. Richmond was almost an entire stranger in the land which he claimed as his inheritance, and many persons who secretly desired his success, dared not venture to declare for him openly, lest in their entire ignorance of the plans and prospects of the invaders they should compromise their own safety by embarking in a desperate cause. The earl had traversed the kingdom too rapidly to allow the bulk of the people time for consideration, and they obeyed the king's orders mechanically, advancing with their weapons to his aid, whilst their hearts were indifferent or adverse. The imposing force which his commands had assembled elated Richard with a vain confidence, notwithstanding that alarming symptoms had already appeared in the desertion of Sir Thomas Bourchier and Sir Walter Hungerford, who quitted their leader at Stoney Stratford, and went over to the enemy.

Richard mustered the dazzling files of his multitudinous array at Nottingham; he presented himself to the soldiers decorated in all the splendour of royalty, the crown, which with almost childish vanity he seized every occasion to display, binding his brows with its jewelled circlet, and mounted upon a milk-

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white war-horse, he surveyed the embattled ranks of a mighty host, who, could he have been secure of their fidelity, would have crushed at one stroke the puny arm which rebellion had dared to raise. The king's well-appointed army consisted of strong squadrons of cavalry, an equally numerous body of men-at-arms, and the usual proportion of archers. At the head of an extensive column of infantry shining in their polished mail, with banners proudly waving, and the spirit-stirring trumpet sending forth its martial sounds, Richard marched in regal state from Nottingham, followed by thronging crowds attracted by the radiant pomp of the gorgeous cavalcade. The cavalry to the right and left formed splendid wings to the close battalions which moved steadily in the centre, and the king thus gallantly accompanied entered Leicester soon after sunset on the evening of the same day, the twentieth of August.

1485. The proportion of this widely spreading host, truly and zealously attached to the king, was very small indeed, with the exception of the immediate creatures of his bounty, Lovel, Catesby, Brackenbury, and Ratcliffe, Lord Ferrers and the Duke of Norfolk were the only men of eminence who were sincerely devoted to Richard's cause; the latter had exerted himself with untiring ardour in the monarch's service, sparing no effort or expense in the collection and equipment of his retainers. A letter addressed to one of the Pastons at this time, strongly denotes the anxious nature of the duke's feeling.

"* Well-beloved friend, I commend me to you, letting you to understand that the king's enemies

* Fenn's Collection, vol. ii. p. 335.

be a land. Wherefore I pray you that you meet with me at Bury, for by the grace of God I purpose to be at Bury as upon Tuesday night; and that ye bring with you such company of tall men as ye may goodly make at my cost and charge, besides that ye have promised the king, and, I pray you ordain them jackets of my livery, and I shall content you at our meeting.

"Your lover,

"J. NORFOLK."

The duke's loyal exertions continued to the last, and were not checked by the alarming discovery of treason made on the morning of the battle of Bosworth field. A hint of the extensive conspiracy formed against the king, was on that day darkly conveyed to him in two lines of rude verse,

"Jack of Norffolke be not too bolde,
For Dykon thy meister is bought and sold."*

This distich, so honourable to the duke as an evidence of his active fidelity, proves also how widely disaffection to Richard's government had spread; the prophetic intimation was realized, and the king at the head of an overwhelming army betrayed into the hands of the paltry force which followed Richmond's banner to the field.

Henry Tudor in the mean time was steadily advancing upon his hazardous march; notwithstanding the prosperous fortune which had hitherto attended him, the utmost daring of an unshrinking spirit could alone have supported the adventurer through the

* Hall.

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perplexing and harassing doubts which clouded his progress up to the hour of his final triumph. Sir William Stanley had repaired to Stafford, to give a personal assurance of his zeal in the cause, but the wavering and suspicious conduct of his brother, and the contradictory reports which his apparent vacillation kept continually afloat, agitated the mind of Richmond with the most painful fears respecting the event of the impending conflict: the defection of his father-in-law would be fraught with inevitable ruin, and Stanley with his accustomed caution reserved the manifestation of his intentions to the field of battle. Nor does it appear that Richmond dared to entertain more than a faint hope of the assistance or the neutrality of other noblemen in the king's service: cheering expectations of this nature had doubtless been conveyed to him, or he would scarcely have ventured to penetrate so far. He had reached the very heart of the kingdom without as yet receiving any very important acquisition to his forces; their numbers were not even trebled; and the almost countless multitudes who flocked to banners of his adversary should prove faithful, he was at this moment rushing headlong upon certain death.

From Stafford Richmond proceeded to Litchfield, a station occupied by Lord Stanley with five thousand men; upon the approach of the invaders this wily nobleman, in accordance with the line of policy which he had determined to pursue, drew off his soldiers and marched to Atherstone, a movement which embarrassed both parties, and probably saved the life of Lord Strange. Richmond encamped

without the walls, and the next morning entered the town amidst the acclamations of the inhabitants, a reception which had evinced the popularity of his enterprise throughout the whole of his line of march.

"In one place alone was Henry for a short time apprehensive that his progress would be stayed by the loyalty of the principal authorities. At Shrewsbury we are told* he found the gates shut, and upon demanding admittance as the lawful heir of England the head bailiff declared in answer that he knew no king save King Richard, whose servant he was, and that before any of his master's foes should enter the town entrusted to his care they must pass over his body, an asseveration which he confirmed by oath. Richmond compelled by this resolute denial to retreat from the walls, passed the night in a neighbouring village, and sending embassadors in the morning to negociate with the sturdy bailiff, they succeeded so well that he consented to open the gates to the invaders, ingeniously contriving to fulfil his oath by lying down on the ground and allowing the Earl of Richmond to step over him. He had previously performed an important service to Richard in seizing the person of the Duke of Buckingham when sheriff for the county: but, observes Hutton, "the loser is the rebel; had Buckingham been fortunate, instead of suffering by the axe, he also might have stepped over the bailiff's body."

Between Litchfield and Tamworth, the next station in his route, Henry Tudor received the welcome accession of Hungerford and Bourchier, with

* Hutton's Battle of Bosworth Field.

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a few others, who aware that they were held in suspicion had taken advantage of the darkness of the night and their accurate knowledge of the country to quit the forces under Sir Robert Brackenbury, and striking into bye-roads were fortunately enabled to reach the advancing files of Richmond's troops in safety. The perturbed state of Henry Tudor's mind is forcibly delineated in the descriptive page of Hall. This interesting writer informs us that the earl having received intelligence of the near approach of Richard with a numerous army, became profoundly absorbed in pensive meditation; revolving the doubtful chances of his almost wild attempt, and pondering upon the most fitting measures to pursue in the distressing difficulties which environed him, he lingered unconsciously upon the road, and awakening at length from his reverie found himself benighted at a distance from his soldiers who had totally disappeared. Ignorant of the face of the country and the disposition of its inhabitants, he wandered about for some time without being able discover the objects of his search; in this painful dilemma apprehensive of diverging too far from the advancing army, he resolved to await the dawn at a small village, where without daring to ask a single question lest he should betray himself to one of Richard's outposts, he passed a restless and miserable night. The desolation of Henry Tudor's situation could scarcely be surpassed. Animated in his perilous expedition through Wales by the expectation of being strongly supported the moment he crossed the Severn, these flattering hopes remained unfulfilled, his promised adherents held themselves

timorously aloof, and involved in a state of dreary suspense he was left to form the most gloomy conjectures concerning the issue of his enterprize. With returning day Richmond hastened to overtake his army, whose march he was fortunately enabled to trace without farther deviation. Unwilling to confess the danger into which his imprudence had betrayed him, he led the anxious inquirers who crowded round him to believe that his absence had been voluntary, and occasioned by the necessity of forming plans with some secret friends who were obliged to forbear for the present a public declaration in his favour; and now more than ever solicitous to penetrate the real designs of Stanley he determined to seek an interview at Atherstone, and again quitting his army repaired to a convenient spot adjoining the town, and there awaited the arrival of Sir William Stanley and his brother, who apprised of their kinsman's close vicinity hastened out to meet and welcome him. Richmond's worst fears were appeased by the energetic assurances of his friends, and his confidence in their fidelity being fully re-established, he no longer entertained foreboding apprehensions from the dense force which his rival had collected. Happily convinced that he had not been deceived and betrayed by the base falsehood of insincere advisers, the earl cheerfully prepared to lead his intrepid band against the king's formidable array. From the immediate neighbourhood of the combatants the lapse of a few hours would make the conflict inevitable, and the confederates having briefly arranged their respective measures, Henry Tudor returned with invigorated

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spirits to the quarters of his army. In the course of the ensuing night, Monday the twenty-first of

1485. August, a strong body of Cheshire men led by Sir John Savage, with Sir Brian Sanford, Sir Simon Digby, and others of inferior note, each at the head of a respectable party left the royal camp and joined themselves to Richmond's forces, and the invading army, thus fortunately strengthened by commanders of considerable military experience, notwithstanding the fearful disparity of their numbers, were inspirited to cope with the crowded ranks of Richard's imposing battalions.

1485. The king on the morning of the twenty-first of August marched out of Leicester, and taking up his own quarters at the Abbey of Merivall, encamped his army upon a neighbouring hill, a strong array consisting of nearly six and twenty thousand men, independent of eight thousand soldiers under Sir William and Lord Stanley, who until an hour before the battle he entertained a remote hope of adding to his numbers.

As the important crisis approached Richard's disturbed soul became more than usually agitated. During the proudest moments of his triumphs he could not still the fierce upbraidings of a troubled conscience; and though he had suffered himself to be hurried on by the impetuosity of a reckless ambition to the commission of atrocious crimes, his heart was far from being callous or insensible to the world's odium, and to the secret conviction of its justice. If the splendid fruits of Richard's guilty daring, the regal diadem, and sceptered state, forbade repentance, he endured the agonizing stings

of remorse without its healing balm, suffered the penalty of sin, and lost the hope of pardon. After the murder of the young princes, Sir Thomas More tells us that the king's sufferings were unceasing and intense; "his time," says the historian, was "spente in much pain and trouble outward, much feare, anguish, and sorrow within. For I have heard by credible report of such as were secret with his chamberers, that after this abominable deede done, he never had quiet in his mind, he never thought himself sure. Where he went abroad, his eyes whirled about, his body privily fenced, his hand ever on his dagger, his countenance and manner like one always ready to strike again, he took ill rest at nightes, lay long waking and musing, sore wearied with care and watch, rather slumbered than slept, troubled with fearful dreams, sodainly sommetyme he would start up, leape out of his bed and run about the chamber, so was his restless heart continually tossed and troubled with the tedious impression and stormy remembrance of his abominable deed."

Richard's inquietude was increased by the ominous prophecies of pretended soothsayers; continually haunted by the recollection of some evil augury, the slightest circumstance sufficed to depress his spirits. After the fall of Buckingham in his triumphant progress into Devonshire, where the conqueror's presence quenched the last spark of Dorset's rebellion, his exultation was damped by an idle superstition connected with a name. The corporation of Exeter anxious to evince their loyalty, greeted the monarch on his entrance with a present of a purse containing two hundred nobles, and Richard

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pleased with so convincing a proof of their attachment, returned a gracious answer; but though surrounded by exhilarating prospects, his enemies flying before him, and receiving the flattering homage of obsequious subjects, his proud soul quailed under the sudden oppression of foreboding dread. In surveying the city and its environs, the castle of Rougemont was pointed out to him: he had been told that he would be near his end whenever he came to Richmond, and dismayed by the ominous appellation, he disclosed his secret terrors to the wondering by-standers, mournfully exclaiming, "I see my days will not be long."

Every previously cherished apprehension rushed with appalling magnitude on Richard's tortured soul during the night before his last eventful struggle for the crown; dismal visions haunted the restless slumbers of an uneasy couch throughout the hours of darkness, black shapes flitted around him like fiends already contending for their prey.* Returning consciousness could not dissipate the awful terrors of the night; aghast with horror, Richard's trembling frame, haggard eyes, and convulsed features betrayed the agitated state of his mind, and fearing least his friends should attribute these suspicious symptoms to a craven spirit, appalled at the approach of human enemies, he confessed the cause to the attendants of his person, describing the baleful phantoms which had blanched his cheek and shaken every limb. Rallying his failing spirits, the king breathed vengeance against his rebellious foes, menacing the adherents of Richmond with signal

* Hall.

punishment, and predicting equal misery to England from the vindictive spirit of his rival, should victory declare for the Lancastrians. CHAP. XII.

The hour of battle was fast approaching, and as Stanley still delayed to bring up his forces, Richard abandoned the delusive hope of this nobleman's fidelity, and immediately ordered the execution of Lord Strange; but the monarch was no longer absolute: doubtful respecting the issue of the impending contest, his officers unwilling to incur the vengeance of the enemy, should the sceptre pass into other hands, scrupled to obey the sanguinary mandate. The uplifted axe thus fortunately arrested, when the army began to move Richard suffered himself to be prevailed upon to reserve the stroke until he should return in triumph; his proud heart being now obliged to yield to the bold suggestions of those accustomed to submit in silence to his will.

The king advanced from his encampment at the head of his formidable array, wearing for the last time the dearly purchased crown upon his brows; but though he despised the talents of Richmond, who, languishing throughout the flower of his youth in dull captivity in Bretagne, was necessarily destitute of military experience, it was observed that Richard did not display the glowing ardour which on other occasions had lighted up his brow when rushing to the fight; until, warmed by the conflict, and despairing of all succour, he flung himself with unyielding valour into the jaws of death. Aug. 22, 1485.

Richard's mental sufferings and intense anxiety did not however cloud his judgment; the able disposition of his forces evinced the genius of the

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commander, he spread out his lines to an almost interminable length, trusting that the ostentatious display would strike terror through the enemy's thin ranks, and he strengthened the centre by a select body of archers under the Duke of Norfolk,* and these were supported by heavily armed battalions, composed of chosen men, forming an impregnable square, which he commanded in person, whilst the outstretched wings were flanked by divisions of cavalry.

Having arranged the order of battle, Richard called his chieftains together, and exhorted them to support him against an unknown adventurer. In this moment of peril and humiliation, the usurper, we are told,† permitted a confession of guilt to escape his lips,‡ and condescended to entreat his

* Hall. † Hall.

‡ Richard's avowal of the crime of which so many writers are anxious to exonerate him rests upon the authority of Hall and Grafton. Upon this point it has been the fashion to dispute the testimony of historians otherwise esteemed for their veracity. The possibility of obtaining a correct version of orations made upon the field of battle at so early a period may be doubted, but in all probability the writers above-mentioned have preserved the substance of Richard's speech. The whole address though curious is too long for quotation; the commencement runs thus:—

"Most faithfull and assured felowes, moste trusty and wel beloued frendes and elected captains, by whose wisdom and polecie, I have obteyned the crowne and type of this famous realm and noble regio: by whose puissance and valiauntness I have enioied and possessed the state roial and dignite of ye same, maugre ye yl wil and sedicious attemptes of all my cancarde enemies and insidious aduersaries, by whose prudent and politike consaill I haue so gouerned my people and subiectes. I haue omitted nothing appertenig to ye office of a iuste prince, nor you haue pretermitted nothing belongyng to ye duty of wise and sage counsaillors. So I may saie and truly affirme that your approued fidelite and tried constancye maketh me to beleue firmely and thinke I am an vndoubted kyng and indubitate prince. And although in ye adepcion and obteinyng of ye Garlade, I being seduced and prouoked by

auditors to forget a crime which he trusted had been expiated by penitential tears, and then bursting forth into his usual bold style of declamation, he dilated upon the weakness of the enemy, and charging his captains to advance forward and end the conflict by one determined stroke, exclaimed, "As for myself, I assure you I will this day triumph by glorious victory, or suffer death for immortal fame!" CHAP. X.

The encampment of Richmond lay very near to that of his enemy, and morning found him with a small attendance of five thousand soldiers. The forces of Lord Stanley and those of his brother were drawn up at opposite points between the two armies. In answer to Henry Tudor's request that his father-in-law would aid him with his council in their joint preparations, Stanley again shook Richmond's confidence by declining to appear until the commencement of the battle should afford the most fitting opportunity of declaring for the Lancastrians. Doubtful of receiving the promised support, and left entirely to his own slender resources, Henry by the direction of Sir John Savage and Lord Oxford, the most skilful commanders in his service, marshalled his feeble array. The line, extended as far as prudence would allow, was exceedingly weak. De Vere occupied the centre with a picked band of archers, and the two wings were entrusted to Sir

sinister cousail and diabolical temptecion dyd commyt a facynerous and detestable acte, yet I haue with strayte penaunce and salt teryes (as I trust) expiated and clerely purged the same offence, which abhominable crime I require you of friendship as clerely to forget, as I dayly do remember to deplore and lament the same, yt you will now diligently call to remembraunce in what case and perplexitie we nowe stand, and in what doubtfull perell we be now intricked."

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Gilbert Talbot and Sir John Savage. The Stanleys were in command of eight thousand men; but even in the event of being strengthened by so large a reinforcement, Richard's numbers would still more than double those of his intrepid rival, and without the co-operation of these apparently vacillating friends, Henry Tudor could only anticipate a hopeless struggle with disgrace and death. Undismayed by these gloomy prospects, the gallant earl rode through the ranks, infusing new spirits into the hearts of his soldiers by cheering words, and having spoken individually to each separate battalion, he ascended an eminence, where armed at all points with the exception of his helmet, he addressed the whole assembly. Henry Tudor's person and manners were striking and attractive, Hall tells us, though "of no great stature," that his dignified deportment and animated countenance interested the admiring spectators in his favour; his yellow hair "lyke the burnished gold" clustered radiantly over his shining eyes, every expressive feature beamed with courage and intelligence, and "he seemed," says the historian, "more like an angelical creature than a terrestrial personage." Pausing for a few minutes, when the listening crowd were hushed into expectant silence, the illustrious warrior, with a clear distinct voice and a bold energetic style, admirably suited to the occasion, recounted the merits of his cause, the crimes of the usurper, and the bright hope of success in a conflict with an unnatural tyrant, aided only by men, who shared his crimes, or who were reluctantly compelled into his service; and exhorting the soldiers to remember that victory might be snatched

from opposing multitudes by a few fearless and resolute hearts, declared that in so righteous a cause, and in so just a quarrel, they should on that day find his lifeless body upon the cold ground, rather than see him live at ease in a lady's chamber, and concluded by exhorting them to rush forward, "as loyal men against traitors, as humane persons against murderers, rightful inheritors against usurpers, the scourges of God's wrath sent to destroy tyrants. Gain the victory this day," he exclaimed, "and be conquerors—lose it and be slaves; therefore, in the name of God and St. George, let every man courageously advance forth his standard."*

Both parties were now prepared for action; a wide morass intervened between the hostile armies, and Richmond first leading his troops forward, posted them judiciously with their right flank upon this barrier, placing them at the same time with their backs to the sun, which shining with dazzling radiance full upon the front of the enemy, blinded their eyes with excess of light, whilst it gave a clear and distinct view of every object to the more shaded Lancastrians.†

The skill and conduct of Oxford on the outset obtained an early and decisive advantage; the battle commenced with a heavy flight of arrows, and the earl perceiving the amazing strength of Richard's centre, was compelled to alter the disposition of his troops, which if attacked in their weak line he felt assured must be inevitably overpowered by the

* In giving the speech of Richmond, Hall ingenuously tells us, that th Earl addressed his companions in these, or the like words following.

† Croyland.

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tremendous force opposed against them; he therefore commanded each soldier to abide stoutly by his standard, and concentrating his division into the form of a wedge, awaited the moment for successful action. De Vere's change of measures obliged him to pause, and the enemy doubtful of each other, and surprised by this unexpected manœuvre, hesitated also. Resolutely determined to break the king's line, Oxford cheered on his gallant band, and charging furiously, was followed by Lord Stanley, who suddenly dropping the mask, ranged himself on the side of the Lancastrians. The weak part of Richard's army now gave way; the disaffected joined his enemies, and the Earl of Northumberland, with an excess of apathy perfectly inconsistent with the spirit of the age, drew off his retainers to a convenient distance, and stood calmly viewing the fierce and mortal struggle which ensued. Richard's sole hope of success rested on the Duke of Norfolk's division, who faithful to the last, fought with unyielding bravery. Desperately disputing every inch of ground, they were at length obliged to fall back. Richard himself it is said, after performing prodigies of valour, was compelled to recruit his wearied limbs, and slake the burning fever on his parched lips at a spring which welled out at a short distance from the scene of contention. Despairing of victory, a few faithful friends brought him a swift horse, and representing the utter hopelessness of farther exertion, conjured him to escape whilst there was yet time; but the monarch's intrepid heart disdained the alternative, and again encircling his brows with the regal diadem, dauntlessly exclaimed,

"Not one foot will I fly—this day shall end all my battles or terminate my life; I will die King of England,"* and then plunging into the hottest scene of the action he made another gallant stand, which held the victory in doubt for the space of two anxious and laborious hours. In the midst of the engagement with De Vere's forces, the king espied Henry Tudor surrounded by a small company of men at arms, standing within reach of his pursuing steed, and dashing out of the line, he rushed forwards, eagerly desirous to perish or to conquer in deadly combat with his invading foe: encountering Sir William Brandon, the earl's standard bearer, he stretched him dead on the earth with one thrust of his lance, and swept on in search of Richmond. Sir John Cheney, who saw the advance of both princes, interposed between them; again Richard's prowess prevailed, the knight bit the dust, and the conqueror drawing his sword essayed to cut his desperate way through the guarding forces who hastened to Richmond's assistance: the personal conflict so ardently sought was almost in the king's power; fighting alone, his enemies fell around him, and Henry Tudor however gallant and skilled in feats of arms, could scarcely have withstood the fierce impetuosity of the king's career; but at this important crisis Sir William Stanley, who had hitherto remained totally inactive, suddenly charged at the head of three thousand followers, and turned the doubtful fortunes of the day.

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Richard, baffled, disappointed, and sold into the enemy's hand, shrank not from impending death, he

* Grafton.

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exclaimed that he was betrayed, but still rushed on; and shouting *treason! treason! treason! perished with the last indignant cry, his life-blood gushing from innumerable wounds.

The most chivalric monarch might have envied the closing scene of Richard's eventful career; gallantly contending for the crown he fell gloriously, yielding only to the death-strokes of surrounding thousands; but the magnanimity which he displayed, the splendour of his last almost unparalleled exertions, the imposing grandeur of his desperate determination to leave his mangled corse upon the field rather than submit to Richmond's arm, all give melancholy evidence that the heroic monarch was sacrificed to the hatred of a revolting world. A better cause, a more popular sovereign, would have kindled a flame of generous enthusiasm in the breasts of those cold spectators, who saw him plunge headlong upon the weapons of his inveterate enemies without stretching out a hand to save him from a yawning grave. Had Northumberland proved true, the battle would not have been decided by the defection of the Stanleys, and the earl's obstinate neutrality does not appear to have been occasioned by any previous negociation with Richmond, neither did the nobles and leaders of Richard's court desert him for the hope of personal advantage from the liberality of a more munificent sovereign. With the exception of the few aliens who followed Henry Tudor from a foreign land, there was not a single partizan either actively or passively declaring in his favour, who were in the slightest degree obnoxious to the charge of hav-

* Rous.

ing been influenced by avaricious or ambitious motives. The Stanleys were peculiarly favoured by the king, each holding high appointments in addition to many valuable grants. Northumberland had been distinguished by the gift of a large estate, besides lordships, manors, lands, and offices in several counties, marks of Richard's princely bounty to himself and to his kinsmen, the Percies. Morgan Kidwelly, Sir John Savage, ap Thomas, Talbot, Hungerford and Bourchier, likewise enjoyed honours and grants from the same generous hand: and many, who without engaging on Richmond's part declined all interposition in the battle, and gazed with tame indifference upon the slaughter of the devoted king, were equally indebted for their possessions and dignities to his lavish prodigality of the crown revenues. The innocence of Richard of the darkest charge brought against him has been strenuously maintained, but the fact of his thus perishing unaided is at least strong presumptive evidence of his guilt. These noblemen had much to lose both in wealth and honours; their future gain was uncertain; and after all, ingratitude is one of those crimes rarely committed without a motive. When such gallant bearing failed to arouse an answering spirit, it is not too much to suppose that the usurper's unforgotten and abhorred cruelty to his youthful nephews was yet heavy on the minds of men, and paralyzed arms that might otherwise have been raised in his defence.

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Richard's fall suspended hostilities, and his triumphant rival kneeling down upon the crimson field, breathed out a fervent thanksgiving to heaven for the signal victory which had blessed his arms. This

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pious duty concluded, the grateful conqueror ascended a hill, and in a short and energetic speech expressed the warm feelings of an overflowing heart to the delighted soldiers, to whose bravery under Providence he attributed the glorious issue of the combat.* Richmond's next thoughts were directed to the killed and wounded; he gave orders for the burial of the dead, and recommended the still surviving sufferers to the compassionate attention of their companions in arms. Every eye was fixed upon the victor, thus graciously manifesting the most estimable qualities of the human heart, and the public mind already strongly excited burst forth into shouts of joyful gratulation. The wide field resounded with enthusiastic cries, and Sir William Stanley seizing the propitious moment placed the crown, a splendid trophy of his late success, on Richmond's head, and hailed him king, amid the animating cheers of an applauding multitude.

Richard's diadem, hacked and hewed from his brows in the deadly strife, was discovered under a hawthorn bush by Reginald Bray, who had committed the glittering prize to Stanley's hands, and popular feeling aiding the wishes of Henry Tudor's friends, the achievements of the day were gloriously and appropriately terminated by a public coronation.

The Duke of Norfolk, Lord Ferrers, and Sir Robert Brackenbury, evinced their fidelity to Richard by sharing his fate; they were found dead upon the field of battle, with about a thousand of their followers; of the former of these noblemen Holinshed

* Holinshed.

justly observes, "He regarded more his oath, his honour, and his promise made to King Richard, like a gentleman; and, as a faithful subject to his prince, he absented not himself from his master: but, as he faithfully lived under him, so he manfully died with him, to his great fame and laude." CHAP. XII.

The Duke of Norfolk's conduct merits the praise of being consistent; he had deserted the interests of Edward's children for a ducal coronet, and he steadily upheld the power from whence his guilty honours had been derived. Northumberland, also obnoxious to the charge of aiding Richard's ambitious projects, performed a different part; he had sate upon the mock tribunal which doomed Rivers to an untimely grave; but in the earl's justification it may be said, that though influenced to join in the lawless persecution of an opposing faction, he might not have been prepared to sanction Richard's subsequent acts; he was probably one amid those vast multitudes who turned with loathing from a murderer stained with infant blood.

There is something particularly chivalric and striking in the death of Sir Robert Brackenbury, as it is recorded by one of the historians of Bosworth field. The bribed minister of Richard's tyranny, he presented an anomaly not uncommon in these barbarous times, blending the accomplishments of knighthood with the mercenary spirit of a ruffian hireling; it is said, that encountering Sir Walter Hungerford, who had left him on the march from London, in the enemy's lines, he applied the words, "deserting traitor" to his late companion. Hungerford disdaining to answer the aspersion, aimed a deadly blow at

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the reviler's head. Brackenbury caught the stroke upon his shield, which was shivered by its force; and Hungerford instantly relinquished his own target to the care of his esquire, and heroically exclaimed, that he scorned the advantage, and would fight on equal terms. The combat was renewed; and Sir Walter's avenging sword still prevailing, Brackenbury's perilous situation interested the feelings of Sir Thomas Bourchier,* who had also abandoned the colours of his master for those of Richmond, and he cried out, "Spare his life, brave Hungerford, he has been our friend, and may be so again:" but the death-wound had been given, and he fell; his gallant defence, and Bourchier's anxious interference, evincing proofs of martial conduct and endearing qualities, which we are not prepared to expect from the coward heart, which, shrinking from the responsibility of a black deed, surrendered up his trust to the more daring instrument of Richard's crimes, and stood supine, tacitly abetting the foul murder of his helpless captives.

†Another single combat, equally interesting, is said to have taken place between the Duke of Norfolk and De Vere Earl of Oxford; each recognized the other by his device, that of the former being a silver lion, the latter the star paled with rays, so fatally distinguished at the battle of Barnet. Animated by the rancorous spirit produced by civil discord, they broke their spears in the fierce encounter, and then advancing sword in hand Norfolk struck at the head of his antagonist; the weapon failed in its intended purpose, but glancing down the side of the helmet

* Hutton's Bosworth Field. † Hutton's Bosworth Field.

grazed the shoulder and inflicted a wound on the left arm. Oxford vigorously returned the assault, and cleaving the duke's helmet, left his head bare and unguarded; but too generous to press upon a defenceless enemy paused, and withdrew a few paces: at this moment an arrow winged by a remote and unknown hand pierced Norfolk's brain and stretched him a corse upon the earth. Oxford surveyed the melancholy catastrophe with feelings honourable to his heart, pronouncing an eulogium upon the chivalric character of his political adversary. "A better knight could not die though he might in a better cause." Surrey we are told rushed forward to avenge his parent's fall, and maintained an unequal combat with the partisans of Richmond for some time wholly unsupported; at length Sir Richard Clarendon and Sir James Conyers, two of Richard's knights, hastened to his assistance, but being overpowered and slain by the followers of Sir John Savage, who vainly essayed to save their lives, the gallant earl, again compelled to fight alone against a host flushed with recent victory relaxed in his exertions and fell back; a private soldier perceiving his exhausted state pressed onwards to take him prisoner, but Surrey scorning to yield to so mean a foe, rallied his failing strength, and disabling his adversary with a single blow, surrendered to Sir Gilbert Talbot.

An instance of exalted friendship, likewise recorded by the historian of Bosworth field already quoted, deserves honourable mention. A strong attachment had long subsisted between Sir John Byron and Sir Gervase Clifton, both Nottinghamshire gen-

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tlemen and near neighbours. Upon the Lancastrian invasion, the former joined the standard of Henry Tudor, while the latter remained faithful to Richard; but differing so widely in their political sentiments, and espousing opposite interests, the bond that united these noble spirits was not snapped, and previous to their separation under rival banners they both solemnly engaged, that if either should be vanquished the other should intercede with the conqueror, and exert all his influence to prevent the forfeiture of the estate belonging to the defeated party. During the heat of the conflict Clifton received a mortal wound; the watchful eyes of his friend observed his fall, he fled from the opposing ranks, supported the expiring warrior in his arms, and presenting his own shield as a guard against all hostile weapons, entreated that he would surrender. Clifton, feeling that life was ebbing fast, exclaimed, "All is over," and with his dying breath besought his friend to remember the promise so sacredly pledged, and to watch over the interests of the orphan children now left defenceless at the victor's mercy. The faithful Byron honourably fulfilled his engagements, and preserved the luckless knight's estates to his descendants.

For another anecdote relative to Bosworth field the author is indebted to the kindness of Dr. Meyrick. The record of an almost solitary act of fidelity and attachment shewn to the person of Richard by a follower not bound to him by a participation in his crimes runs thus:* "Rhys Vychan was owner of

* From a MS. in the possession of Dr. Wynn, the last male descendant of the Gwydyr family. Copied from a very old one.

great lands and possessions in Mon Caernarvonshire and Flintshire. He was esquire of the body unto Richard III., and did attend him in his privy chamber, and by patent was free denizen within England. He had purchased from the king three goodly manors near Whitchurch, and had bought Aber Cammis and Wig and divers other things which were all taken from him by Henry VII. When Richard saw that Stanley was become a turncoat and that all the Welshmen had revolted from him, he called for a boule of wine sitting on horseback in his complete armour, and when the wine was brought him, he called unto Rhys Vychan and drank unto him in these words: 'Here Vychan I will drink to thee the truest Welshman that ever I found in Wales,' and having drank, threw the boule over his head and made towards his enemies, where he was immediately slain." CHAP. XII.

Lord Lovel escaped from the field of battle into sanctuary, and Sir William Catesby, who also endeavoured to save himself by flight, was pursued and overtaken, and survived the carnage of the king's immediate friends only to lay his head upon the block.

The universal feeling against Richard extended to his lifeless corse; the body was stripped and thrown with studied indignity upon the back of a horse behind a pursuivant at arms; urged forward by the brutal rider the animal in passing over a bridge crushed the head of its ghastly burthen against a projecting stone, and thus disfigured and covered with blood and dirt the mortal remains of the last monarch who bore the illustrious name of Plan-

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tagenet, were exposed to public view, being afterwards interred with little ceremony in the church of the Gray Friars at Leicester.*

Henry marched his victorious troops from the scene of his splendid victory to the neighbouring town, where he was received with those acclamations which a conqueror seldom fails to elicit from the multitude, delighting in pomp and pageantry, and eager to assert their right to the expression of their feelings upon all public occasions. The popularity of Henry's cause most probably rendered these manifestations sincere, for Richard had vainly sought to acquire the esteem and affection of his subjects, and with the exception of his northern adherents, fear and not love was the principle which ensured obedience to a government almost universally disliked, notwithstanding its just and numerous claims to national confidence.

Richard's crimson hand had sapped the foundation of the House of York, and he fell beneath its ruins; few were found to lament the monarch's fate, though perishing in the flower of his age, and by a cold blooded conspiracy unparalleled even in those annals which record the frequent and treacherous desertions of the fickle partisans of either rose, during a long and sanguinary civil war.

* Hall.

CHAPTER XIII.

Description of Richard's Person—Compliments paid to him—Extract from Holinshed—Decay of the White Rose—Cecily Duchess of York—Reports respecting her interference in public affairs—her Descent from the Lancastrians—Rise and Fall of the Nevilles—Misfortunes and Crimes of Cecily's Children—Supposition concerning St. Leger—Cecily's Retirement—her Death—Henry VII. enriched by her Dower—Elegance of Armour in Richard's Reign—Richard's Fondness for Dress—his Letter—Custom of wearing the Crown—Badge of the White Boar—Richard II.'s White Hart—Incorporation of Heralds—Officers at Arms attached to Noblemen—Rich Presents to Heralds—Proclamations at Christmas.

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To descant upon Richard's character would only be to reiterate the remarks which his actions have drawn forth, but his person demands a few observations: in this particular the usurper seems to have been unfortunate; it was a decided disadvantage to succeed the most beautiful prince of the age: accustomed to the handsome countenance and majestic port of the late monarch, Edward IV., Richard's ungraceful form provoked unfavourable comparisons, and deepened the prejudice excited by the flagitious nature of his conduct; but though dwarfish in stature his face does not appear to have been destitute of the comeliness which distinguished the members of the House of York; the old Countess

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of Desmond who had danced with him at a ball, according to Walpole, declared that he was the handsomest man in the assembly, except his brother. Dr. Shaw also, in his sermon, complimented him on the striking resemblance he bore to his father, Richard, Duke of York; and Burke, in translating a Latin oration composed by one of the commissioners who negociated a peace and marriage between England and Scotland, renders one passage thus, an encomium which if too flattering had probably some foundation in truth: "Behold in your *face* a princely majesty and authority royal, sparkling with the illustrious beams of all moral and heroical virtues." It was therefore the shrunk and withered arm, or probably a misshapen and distorted arm, since Gloucester's strength in the field was incompatible with weakness of frame, and the ill proportioned body, for there seems to be no sufficient proof of more conspicuous deformity, which furnished Richard's enemies with the groundwork for their revolting pictures. The description given by Hollinshed, though not entirely authorizing the hideous exaggerations of dramatic writers, affords ample scope for poetic license. Shakspeare has probably drawn his crooked backed tyrant from the historian's vivid sketch: "As he was small and little of stature, so was he of bodie greatly deformed, *the one shoulder higher than the other*, his face small, but his countenance was cruel, and suche that at the first aspect a man would judge it to favour and smell of malice and deceit: when he stode musing he would bite and chawe buisily his nether lippe, as who said that his fierce nature in

his cruel bodie always chafed, sterred, and was ever unquiet: beside that, the dagger which he wore he wolde, when he studyed, with his hande plucke up and downe in the sheath to the mids, never drawing it fully out: he was of a ready, pregnant, and quicke wit, wily to feign and apt to dissemble: he had a proud mind and an arrogant stomache, the which accompanied him even to his death, rather chusing to suffer the same by dint of sword, than being forsaken and left helplesse of his unfaithful companions, to preserve by cowardly flight such a frail and uncertain life, which by malice, sickness, or condign punishment was like shortly to come to confusion." Richard was only thirty-two at the period of his death, falling by the hand of violence after a tumultuous, short, and tragic reign of little more than two years continuance.

The white rose, lately so fair and flourishing, had now dwindled, and was withering to decay. Edward's daughters, weak from their sex, and abased by the stigma cast upon their birth, together with a feeble boy, the unfortunate heir of Clarence, were alone opposed to the triumphant Lancastrian. We have unhappily no record to acquaint us with the state of the Duchess of York's feelings upon the miserable catastrophe which befel her last surviving son. Of this illustrious matron little is known, excepting her exaltation and her misfortunes; some writers have imagined that at the decease of Edward IV. she participated in the intrigues of the faction who placed his brother on the throne; but there appears to be no adequate foundation for this surmise, which seems to have originated merely from the circumstance of Richard having held his

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first council at Baynard's Castle, a palace belonging to the duchess, instead of his own residence at Crosbie House, in the city. A letter addressed from Pontefract, by Richard to his mother, is somewhat more conclusive respecting the warm nature of the affection which is said to have subsisted between them: but the duchess throughout her whole life abstained from all political interference; her name is seldom mentioned in the chronicles of the times; and having retired from the world at her husband's death, it is probable that she neither sanctioned or condemned proceedings which she had not the power to controul. We are told that she was a princess of spotless virtue, and however anxious for the elevation of a beloved son, the slightest attempt to second his ambitious views by sinister means would have been incompatible with the unsullied purity of her character.

'The degree of interest taken by the Duchess of York in the extraordinary vicissitudes to which her family and her descendants were exposed, must at this distant period of time be wholly confined to conjecture, but though the narrative is thus necessarily brief and meagre, even a bare recapitulation of the striking events which occurred during a protracted existence, to the extensive circle of her connections, can scarcely fail to excite the attention and sympathy of a later age.

Cecily Duchess of York, was by birth a Lancastrian, her mother being Joan Beaufort, daughter of John of Ghent, by Catherine Swynford, who married Ralph Nevill, Earl of Westmoreland. She was the youngest of twenty-one children, and surpassed them all in the splendour of her destiny, for

becoming the wife of Richard Plantagenet, Duke of York, her rich and powerful family eagerly devoted their wealth and influence in the destruction of the House of Lancaster, and the establishment of the rightful heir upon the throne.

In the course of a long and deadly struggle between the rival roses, the proud race of Nevill swayed the destinies of crowned heads, a short and brilliant triumph—presumptuously ambitious, during the life of their kinswoman the Duchess of York; they became too potent for subjects, and after a series of splendid achievements, without a parallel in England's annals, were swept away, their very name almost extinguished, even before the relative, who by their conquering swords became the mother of a line of kings, had descended to her grave.

Bitterly experiencing the transitory nature of earthly distinctions, Cecily beheld her husband fall at the very moment when the glittering object of his rash ambition seemed to be within his grasp. In the early part of her marriage she mourned over the death of four sons, cut off in childhood by disease, and the bereaved mother lived to contrast the tranquil dissolution of these innocent beings with the dark fate of their surviving brethren. The barbarous murder of Edmund Duke of Rutland by Clifford's butchering sword; the unhappy feuds between the misguided Clarence and his more subtle kinsman, which ended at length in the ruin of that avaricious, turbulent, fickle, but assuredly most unfortunate prince, were calamitous events only to be exceeded by Richard's guilt, whose inordinate thirst for power brought more fatal mischief on the House

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of York than the whole weight and authority of the Lancastrians had been able to effect in nine murderous battles.

One only of Cecily's daughters outlived her mother, the amazonian Margaret Duchess of Burgundy, distinguished as the inveterate enemy of Henry VII. Ursula, the youngest, died an infant, and Elizabeth, married to John de la Pole Duke of Suffolk, though escaping personal suffering in the wide desolation which destroyed so many relatives, bequeathed a miserable doom to her descendants. Anne, the unfeeling wife of Henry Holand Duke of Exeter, lived only two years after her union with Sir Thomas St. Leger, whose fate closely resembled that of her first husband, since he also perished in rebellion against the crown. It has been suggested that the knight's disloyalty was the result of disappointed ambition, the king having preferred the Earl of Lincoln as his presumptive heir, to Anne the offspring of the Duchess of Exeter's second marriage; but as the death of Edward Prince of Wales, Richard's son, did not take place until some time after the execution of St. Leger, his participation in Buckingham's revolt must be attributed to more generous motives; he had been one of the mourners at King Edward's funeral, assisting to carry the blue silk canopy which was borne over the corpse, and his name also occurs as one of Edward's associates in the expedition to France, and faithfully attached to the monarch's children he engaged in the chivalric but unfortunate attempt to raise the drooping white rose, Elizabeth Plantagenet, to her father's throne.

In 1480 Cecily, taught by the miseries which she

had encountered in a vain and deceitful world to look beyond the grave for hope and consolation, became a nun of the Benedictine order. Tranquil if not happy, the amiable and pious recluse spent the remainder of her life in holy meditation and in prayer, as appears by the account of the manner in which she is stated to have employed the whole of her time in the dignified retirement so well suited to her rank, her age, and her misfortunes.* CHAP. XIII.

The Duchess of York died at her castle of Berkhampstead, and was buried in accordance with her own desire at Fotheringay, in Northamptonshire, by the side of her gallant husband Richard Duke of York. The bones of this illustrious couple were removed to a vault prepared in the same church, by the order of their distinguished descendant Elizabeth Queen of England, in consequence of the destruction of the chancel where the duke's corse had been interred with almost regal magnificence, by the pious care of his son. The will of Cecily is dated in 1495, the year of her death, and the period of a new storm raised by the restless enmity of her last surviving child, Margaret of Burgundy, who in her blind rage against the House of Lancaster, would have sacrificed the interests of Elizabeth and her children, and deluged the devoted land with fresh streams of native blood. If the soul of the venerable princess still retained an anxious thought connected with the affairs of the world she was about to leave, the expiring hours of her eventful life must have been clouded by direful apprehensions of new disasters.

* See "Ordinances and Regulations of the Household of the Princess Cecill," published by the Society of Antiquaries.

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Accustomed to extraordinary revolutions, she had seen the dynasty of England thrice changed, watched the rise and fall of successive potentates, and taught a bitter lesson from the miseries produced by the unnatural dissensions amongst her own family, might have contemplated the entire subjugation of the House of York by the arms of an accomplished impostor, the daring instrument of Margaret's vindictive wrath.

Cecily's large dower fell at her death to Henry VII., who it has been said laid some restraint upon one of his strongest passions—his avarice, in abstaining from the seizure of her coveted possessions. Baynard's Castle, which Henry rebuilt, "more," says Stow, "in the manner of a palace than a castle," became one of the monarch's favourite residences.

Few changes of fashion occurred during the short reign of Richard III.; but Dr. Meyrick remarks that "no higher degree of perfection was ever attained in armour. The outline of the suit," continues that diligent antiquary, "was most elegant, the workmanship most elaborate, and the choice of ornament full of taste." The buildings of the time were also distinguished for the florid richness of their decorations.

Richard's chief foible was his love of dress, the finical splendour of his attire affording a strange contrast to the stern fierceness of his deportment. It has been before remarked that in the midst of the severest cares of state, and while meditating a deed which has fastened the name of tyrant upon him for ever, the monarch found inclination and leisure to attend to the minutiæ of the decorations for his

person. A letter addressed by the king from York to Piers Curteis, keeper of his wardrobe, runs thus:

"We wol and charge you to deliver to the bringers hereof for us the parcels following: that is to say, first, one doublet of purple satten lined with Holland cloth, and enterlined with buske; one doublet of tawny satten lined in likewise; two short gowns of cremysyn cloth of gold, the one with droppis, and that other with netts, lined with green velvet; one cloak with a cape of violet ingrained, the bow lined with black velvet; one stomacher of purple sattin; one stomacher of tawny sattin; one gown of green velvet, lined with tawny sattin; one yard and three quarters corse of silk meddled with gold, and as much black corse of silk for our spurs; two yards and an half and three nayls of white cloth of gold for a crynelze for a borde; five yards of black velvet for a lining of a gown of green sattin; one plakard made of part of the said two yards and one half and two nayls of white cloth of gold, lined with buckram; three pair of spurs short, al gilt; two pair of spurs long, white parcel gilt; two yards of black buckram for amending of the lining of divers trappers; one banner of sarcenet of our Lady; one banner of the Trinity; one banner of St. George; one banner of St. Edward; one of St. Cuthbert; one of our own arms, al sarcenet; three coats of arms beaten with fine gold for our own person; five coat armours for heraulds, lined with buckram; forty trumpet banners of sarcenet; seven hundred and forty pensils of buckram; three hundred and fifty pensils of tartern; four standards of sarcenet

* Printed by Burke, in Kennet's collection.

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with boars; thirteen quinsyans of fustian with boars."

Richard never missed any opportunity of appearing in public decked in all the trappings of kingly state, and with the dearly-prized crown upon his head; but although he might perhaps have created some occasions for this ostentatious display, yet his desire to exhibit himself wreathed with the regal diadem, was sanctioned by ancient usage. We have seen that the King of France attended the banquet at Whitsuntide crowned, in honour of the holy feast.* The high cap of estate worn upon solemn festivals by Henry VI. "was garnished with two crowns." Henry V. encircled his helmet at the battle of Azincourt with a "coronet sparkling with jewels." And in each of the three miniatures with which the account of the second invasion of Edward IV. in 1471 is embellished, the king is delineated with a crown upon his helmet; though probably in these instances the glittering appendage might have been merely added by the artist, in order to distinguish the king from the surrounding warriors: as in the curious illuminations to the manuscript history of the Earl of Warwick, a royal personage is represented wearing a crown while lying in bed.

Richard appears to have been extremely anxious to exalt his favourite white boar to a distinguished eminence amid the badges of the House of York. In the wardrobe rolls, which have been so diligently searched, in consequence of the extraordinary circumstances which the author of the "Historic Doubts" imagined he had discovered, there is a

* Rous' History of the Earl of Warwick.

charge for "eight thousand bores made and wrought upon fustian;" and five thousand more are mentioned in the general account. During the sovereignty of Richard, we are informed that the white boar was a common sign; "but," continues our author,* "at his death the landlords took down their white boars, and where any one omitted it, the fickle multitude pulled it down for him; and to this day we often behold the black boar and the blue boar, but never the white." Hall likewise tells us, that "when his (Richard's) death was known few lamented and many rejoiced. The proud bragging white boar, which was his badge, was violently rased and plucked down from every sign and place where it might be espied; so ill was his life, that men wished the memorye of hym to be buried with his carren corps." This utter extinction of Richard's favourite device affords strong evidence of the public feeling at the period of his decease, and is a convincing proof that the historians of a later age did not exaggerate in their accounts of the monarch's unpopularity. How different was the fate of the white hart of Richard II.; all the efforts of the successful Bolingbroke were exerted in vain to banish the sign so fondly cherished by the lower ranks of the nation; it exists to this time; kneeling, a crown about its neck, and chained or, it still maintains its rank amid the most esteemed signs of our inns.

To Richard's love for the insignia of royalty we are perhaps indebted for the very existence of the officers at arms, who make so distinguished and picturesque a part of the few pageants now exhi-

* Hutton's Battle of Bosworth Field.

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bited. "With whatever justice," says Dallaway, "the character of Richard III. may be vilified for usurpation and cruelty, the cause of heraldry owes more to him than to any sovereign of this country. Possessed of the greatest personal bravery, he was from his infancy nurtured in war, and attached to military pursuits, and was more especially ambitious of preserving the hereditary dignity and superior claims of the white rose. He supported at his charge Richard Champney, falcon herald, whom upon his accession he created Gloucester king-at-arms, and at whose instance he was farther induced to grant to the body of heralds immunities of great importance. By his letters patent dated on the first of March 1483, the first year of his reign, he directs the incorporation of heralds, assigning for their habitation one messuage with the appurtenances in London, in the parish of All Saints, called Pultney's Inn Cold Harbore, to the use of twelve of the most principal and approved of them for the time, "without compte or any other thing thereof to us or to our heirs to be given or paid."

Previous to the institution of the college of heralds it was the custom for the monarch and the principal nobles of the court to entertain officers at arms in their service at their own expence. Henry de Bohun Earl of Hereford and Northampton was attended by one of these important personages called Hereford herald. We read also of Huntingdon herald, entitled Le Herault serviteur de haut et puissant prince Mr. A. Duc de Exeter Count de Huntingdon et Ivori. The officer at arms, either a volunteer or pressed into the service of Jack Cade,

is stated in the Paston Letters to have belonged to the Duke of Exeter. Richard Macheby Northampton herald in the fifth year of Richard II. had a grant of the priory of Winghale for fifty years,* and instances continually occur in the perusal of the old chronicles of magnificent gifts bestowed upon the dignified messengers of these chivalric ages. Norfolk herald attended on Thomas Howard, the third duke. Warwick herald was retained by Richard Beauchamp, and Northumberland herald and Esperance pursuivant to the Percies. The Earl of Shrewsbury was attended by the same officer at arms for the space of forty years, and many interesting circumstances relating to the attachment and fidelity of heralds to the lords they served are mentioned by the elder historians. Pursuivants frequently derived their titles from the cognizance or motto of their lord. Blanche Lion belonged to Mowbray Duke of Norfolk, who bore the silver lion in his arms, and Egle Vert to Montacute Earl of Salisbury. Blanch Sanglier, or white boar, was created by Richard Duke of Gloucester, and named from his own crest, and after this officer had been compelled to carry the degraded body of his dead sovereign from Bosworth field Henry VII. annihilated the name and substituted another, that of Rouge Dragon, in honour of himself. This monarch while Earl of Richmond was attended by a pursuivant called Rougemont, and having after he ascended the throne adopted all the devices of the House of Lancaster, added another to his train styled Portcullis. When a nobleman, says Dallaway, appointed a herald or pur-

* Dallaway.

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suivant, it was requisite that he should be approved by the king's heralds, and confirmed by the king in person, when the annual stipend was established by the nobleman so appointing. A principal function of these heralds was that of assigning to knights and esquires holding lands under any great baron their proper escutcheon, which universally bore a manifest allusion either to the bearing or cognizance of their feodal lord. Whenever a herald brought agreeable intelligence, the communication was sure to be rewarded by some splendid present. In the pages of Froissart we are frequently informed of the rich donations given by sovereigns and nobles to the officers at arms who proclaimed an intended tournament, or were the bearers of respectful greetings from foreign courts. Philip de Comines also records the gifts bestowed upon heralds in his time, and though history relates instances of the savage violations of the law of arms, which ensured safety to these ambassadors however offensive or insulting their missions might be, it was very seldom that even when giving the insolent message or haughty defiance of their lords that they were dismissed without some token of the princely liberality, which next to valour constituted the most esteemed virtue of the age. The fees which the heralds claimed at tournaments have been already stated, and to avoid the necessity of recurring to the subject again, those usually received at Christmas, at a future period, according to the record of a herald in the service of Henry VII., are inserted in this place. "On the newe yeres day the king being in a rich gowne dynede in his chamber and gave to his officers at arms six pounds of his

largesse when he was cried in his style accustumede. Also the queene gave to the same officers forty shillings, and she was cried in her style. At the same time my lady the king's moder gave twenty shillings, and she was cried largesse three times, de hault puissant et excellente Princess la mer du Roy notre Souveraigne Comtesse de Richemonde et de Derbye largesse. Item—The Duke of Bedford (Jasper Tudor) gave forty shillings, and he was cried largesse de hault et puissant Prince frère et oncle des Roys Duc de Bedforde et Count de Pembroke largesse. Item—The Earl of Derby gave twenty shillings, and he was cried largesse de noble et puissant Seigneur le Beaupèr de Roy notre Souveraigne Counte de Derbye Seigneur de Stanlay et de Man, Counstable d'Engleter largesse. Item—The Treasurer gave six and four-pence, and the Coumtroller gave a crown, wherefore they were cried largesse des nobles officiers le Trezouror et le Countroller de tres noble l'ostell de Roy notre Souveraigne largesse. Item—The Secretary gave six and four-pence, but he was not cried, for it is not the custume to crye any man of the chirche, nor of any lower degree than a viscount, without it be the steward or the chamberleyn: all other barons, bannerets, knights, and esquires, with their wives, were wont to be cried in general. This Cristmase," adds the chronicler, "were many lords now in the court, some coming, some going, which gave no rewards to the officers at arms."*

* Leland's Collection.

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Henry's sojourn at Leicester—Proclamation of Richard's Death—Seizure of Warwick's Person—Disappointment in Henry's Character—Elizabeth repairs to London—Henry's Popularity—Reception in the Metropolis—Departure from ancient Custom—Offering of the Standards—Suppositions concerning them—Pestilence in London—Henry's Coronation—Exaltation of Henry's Friends—Appointment of the Yeomen of the Guard—Henry's Difficulties—Subservience of the Parliament—Disfavour of the Yorkists—Henry's Pretensions to the Throne—Anxiety about the King's Marriage—Union of the Rival Roses—Joy of the People—Act of Attainder—Proceedings of Parliament—A general Pardon—Peers created—Henry's Progress to the North—Rumours of an insurrection—Attempt of Lord Lovel—its defeat—Henry's reception at York—his return to London—Loyalty of the People of Bristol—Gifts to the King—Arrival at Westminster—Discontent of the Yorkists—Birth of Prince Arthur—Baptism of the Young Prince—Strange schemes of the Yorkists—Rise and Progress of an Impostor—A second Pardon proclaimed—Speech of the Earl of Surrey—Enmity of the Duchess of Burgundy—Defection of Lincoln—Coronation of Lambert Simnel—Henry's Conduct to the Dowager Queen—Landing of the Expedition from Ireland—Discipline of the King's Army—Battle of Stoke—Defeat of the Rebels—Henry's Clemency—Liberation of Dorset—Henry's entrance into London—Coronation of the Queen.

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HENRY VII., after the victory of Bosworth Field, remained two days at Leicester; the fatigue and anxiety to which both body and mind had been subjected demanded rest: and starting at once from

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an indigent exile to the sovereignty of a powerful kingdom, he also required time for the discussion and arrangement of his future plans.

Assuming the title of king, which had been granted by popular acclamation, the new monarch caused the tidings of Richard's death to be proclaimed at York. The succeeding step, dictated by a cruel necessity, has stigmatized the first hours of Henry's reign with a brand of tyranny but too well merited. Apprehensive that the friends of the young Earl of Warwick would establish a rival claim, he dispatched Sir Robert Willoughby to Sheriff Hutton Castle (where the unhappy youth had been closely confined by Richard's jealousy) with an order to conduct the prisoner to a more gloomy fortress, the fatal Tower of London. This arbitrary and ungenerous act can be justified only on the plea of self-defence; it was the barbarous policy adopted for the security of a disputed succession. Henry's own unwarrantable ambition in advancing his inexplicable title to the crown of England, taught him to suspect similar designs in princes whose pretensions were so far superior; the danger of permitting a single branch of the opposing party to be at liberty was manifested by the fall of Richard, whose destruction had been accomplished by an agency almost too weak to excite alarm. Henry had himself escaped the persecution of the House of York only to plunge it into ruin, and now prepared to pursue the same illiberal measures which had covered his predecessors with disgrace. We look in vain for a true hero in these factious times; the romance of Henry's life ended at Bosworth Field: a fugitive or a prisoner from the age of five

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years, his unmerited oppression and marvellous adventures are calculated to excite the tenderest sympathy in the early part of his career; but when he burst upon England as its king, the chivalric adventurer vanishes, and we behold only a gloomy, selfish, and ungracious tyrant; and disgusted and disappointed, perhaps do not make sufficient allowance for the difficult circumstances in which he was placed.

The Princess Elizabeth, who had shared her cousin Warwick's captivity at Sheriff Hutton, accompanied an honourable escort of noblemen and gentlemen appointed by Henry to conduct her to the house of her mother in London, which she reached in time to welcome the king's arrival, who proceeded leisurely to the capital, receiving as he passed along enthusiastic assurances of affectionate regard from multitudes crowding to the road side to offer their congratulations. Hall tells us that, "the rusticall people on every syde of the wayes assembled in great nombres, and with great joye clapped their hands and showted, criyng King Henry, King Henry."

When Henry approached London the civic authorities, arrayed in their violet robes, advanced to Hornsey to meet and salute him, accompanying a mark of respect which a triumphant monarch never failed to experience, with a less usual and more flattering demonstration of attachment; each individual pressed forwards to kiss his hand.* At Shoreditch Henry was also greeted by a deputation of peers, who with the principal citizens joined his train. Immense crowds had assembled to witness

* Hall.

the royal entry into the metropolis, but their eager joy was somewhat damped by a precaution which was neither necessary or politic. Henry, instead of gracing the procession on horseback, and thus displaying his martial accomplishments to the public eye, permitted a cold suspicion to deprive the pageant of half its attractions; the victor had already experienced the inspiring effect produced by his animated countenance, radiant hair, and beaming eyes; but the populace vainly hoped to see their monarch ride gallantly at the head of his retinue: he was conveyed through the streets in a close litter, frequently obstructed by anxious multitudes who gathered round to gaze upon their new idol. The cavalcade repaired to St. Paul's Church, where a very interesting ceremonial took place; Henry offered up three standards,* the banners which floating in the van had cheered his slender army through their rapid, toilsome march, and waved over the prostrate ensigns of Richard's mighty host on Bosworth Field.

Hall has preserved the description of these pennons. "In the one was the ymage of St. George; in the second was a red firye dragon beaten upon white and green sarcenet; the third was of yellow tartanne, in the which was painted a done kowe;" and in Willement's Regal Heraldry we find the probable origin of the two last: the author observes, that "the red fiery dragon beaten upon white and green sarcenet, the charge of a standard offered by Henry VII. on his entry into London, and also represented on the corner of his tomb, held by an angel, is said to have been the armorial ensign of Cadwal-

* Hall.

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lader the last of the British kings, and from whom Henry seems fond of declaring his descent. A tradition had existed that Cadwallader had consoled himself at a time when but little of his territories were left to him, with the assurance that one of his posterity would at a future period wear the diadem of England.* Henry, in his struggle for the crown," continues our author, "would very naturally avail himself of superstitious prejudices that might be construed to point to him as the person who was to fulfil the prophecy of his Cambrian ancestor, and with this view he probably adopted for his ensign the red dragon of Cadwallader. The same imaginary animal was, however, frequently borne by the English monarchs. Edmund Ironside, according to Matthew of Westminster, engaged with Knute under the banner of the dragon. Henry III., in the twenty-fourth year of his reign, commanded that a dragon of red sarcenet should be placed in the Abbey Church of Westminster previous to his purposed visit: it was to be made of red sarcenet embroidered with gold, his tongue continually moving, and his eyes of Sapphire.

"In the battle of Lewes the same monarch had a dragon carried before him for an ensign. Edward I., at his entry into Wales, fought under the dragon; and Edward III., according to Barnes, erected his standard of the burning dragon at the battle of Cressy." With respect to the third standard, Willement observes: "It is not improbable that this dun cow was taken by King Henry in allusion to his descent by the Beauforts, through the Beauchamps

* Willement's Regal Heraldry.

of Holt, from Guy the legendary Earl of Warwick, who had slain

> "A monstrous wyld and cruell beast,
> Called the dun cow of Dunsmore heath."

*The grateful monarch having joined in the holy service of the church, directed "Te Deum" to be sung, and then repaired to the bishop's palace, where he took up his residence until after the coronation. Public rejoicings were made all over the city, "plays, pastimes, and pleasures" being exhibited in celebration of the late happy events. But these amusements were suddenly interrupted by the breaking out of a pestilence which spread its destructive ravages throughout the whole metropolis. The progress of the mortality was rapid and extensive, insomuch that two successive Lord Mayors and six Aldermen perished in the short space of eight days; the havoc committed upon persons of less note is unrecorded, but its fatal effects upon the community at large may be conjectured from the deaths of so large a proportion belonging to one distinct class. Happily a method of treatment was discovered which after the destruction of many lives stayed the devouring course of the distemper, and before the period appointed for the coronation it had disappeared.†

The important ceremonial which decorated Henry's brows with a regal diadem took place at Westminster, on the thirtieth of October, with something more than the usual pomp. The Cardinal Archbishop of Canterbury performed the rite, twelve knights ban- 1485.

* Bacon. † Bacon.

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nerets were created in honour of the solemnity, Pembroke, the king's uncle and most faithful friend was raised to a dukedom by the royal title of Bedford, and Lord Stanley and Sir Edward Courtenay were made Earls of Derby and Devon. Henry also at this time appointed a select company of archers consisting of fifty men to be in continual attendance about his person; a measure which whilst it added to the splendour of the court was strongly indicative of distrust.

The English people unaccustomed to see their sovereign surrounded by armed soldiers, were surprised by the innovation, but attributing this new adoption to Henry's long residence in foreign courts, where military retainers made a part of the royal household, they became reconciled; more especially as the king gave a familiar name, that of yeomen of the guard, to the band, who were now constantly to be seen on duty in the apartments of the palace, a picturesque and stately train, which still existing in these modern days, affords a vivid idea of the imposing grandeur which formerly environed a monarch, and distinguished him from the most illustrious portion of his subjects.

It required the whole exertion of Henry's consummate prudence to meet the various difficulties which presented themselves in the ratification of his incongruous claim to the throne; the title which he derived from the House of Lancaster was scarcely tenable, on account of the decision of parliament, who after mature deliberation had awarded the just right to the House of York: and even this defective plea was rendered still weaker by the fatal blemish in his

descent; the right of conquest could not be urged without just offence to a nation free and unsubdued, and the introduction of novel arguments, however plausible and cogent, would be attended with equal danger. Aware of the impossibility of justifying his pretensions, Henry wisely abstained from the unavailing attempt to explain them; and in addressing the parliament, which he had summoned immediately after his coronation, briefly said, that "he had come to the throne by just title of inheritance, and by the sure judgment of God, who had given him the victory over his enemy in the field."* And anxious to efface the unfavourable impression which these last ominous words were calculated to produce, he added that no person should be deprived of his lands and hereditaments without the consent of the present parliament. CHAP XIV.

Both houses, with the submission to the will of the ruling power usual in these days of servile obedience, passed an act of settlement, in which the name of the rightful heiress of the throne, Elizabeth, daughter of Edward IV. was studiously omitted.

Henry was not sufficiently magnanimous to pardon the injuries which he had sustained from the House of York; the partizans of the white rose were continually visited by marks of the royal displeasure, and these invidious distinctions clearly evincing the rancorous hostility of his feelings towards a proscribed party, rendered the policy which excluded the Princess Elizabeth's claim the more odious, since it was supposed to originate in an implacable spirit, unyielding in its hatred to the rival house.

* Parliament Rolls.

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The utmost delicacy of conduct was necessary to remove a prejudice so generally entertained. Henry's personal interests required that he should be established on the throne without appearing to possess the sovereignty in right of his wife, in the event of a marriage with Edward's daughter, since if the king had admitted Elizabeth's pretensions, he must have been content to reign by courtesy alone, the mere shadow of a king, and losing all title to supreme authority upon the death of his wife, whose claim would naturally descend to her children, or to her sisters and their heirs. These weighty considerations may justly be alleged in excuse of the jealous caution which dictated an act, declaring that the succession should rest with the king, his lawful heirs, *and in none other;* but compelled in support of his own dignity to adopt a measure which could not fail to excite indignation in every friend of the House of York, Henry should have studiously endeavoured to shew by gracious conciliations to the adherents of the adverse faction that he had not been swayed by ungenerous motives in silently rejecting Elizabeth's undeniable claims.

Anxious to revive the fading blossoms of the white rose, the Yorkists petitioned Henry to conclude a marriage which offered so bright a prospect of national tranquillity; but the king, even if he gave the required promise, delayed its fulfilment so long that busy tongues began to rumour doubts of his sincerity, and the existing reports sanctioned a suspicion that he was vacillating between the advantages of an alliance with Anne heiress of Bretagne This apparent hesitation created considerable alarm,

and we are told by Bacon "did much afflict the poor Lady Elizabeth herself." Henry, yielding perchance more to the dictates of prudence than to inclination, relinquished the splendid but chimerical project of reigning by his own influence alone, and acquiescing in the ardent wishes of his subjects, led the princess to the altar on the eighteenth of the following January. The public joy at the auspicious and eagerly desired union of the red and the white rose was evinced in a burst of exuberant delight. The most unequivocal demonstrations of happiness were exhibited throughout the metropolis, the festivities far exceeding in pomp and joyousness those which had greeted the entrance and the coronation of the king. Bacon has observed that Henry's victory at Bosworth gave him the *knee* of his subjects, but that his marriage with Lady Elizabeth secured the *heart*; he adds, also, that the unaffected expression of popular attachment to the House of York offended the haughty Lancastrian, who viewed with sullen envy the warm tribute of unpurchasable enthusiasm offered to the young and lovely partner of his throne.

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Catesby, and two others of the name of Brecher, were the only persons amid the prisoners at the battle of Bosworth whom Henry doomed to a scaffold. The death of these men, although possibly merited by their crimes, must ever be deemed a stain upon the victory; their duty to Richard to whom they, in common with the whole kingdom had sworn fealty, demanded their presence in the field, and they suffered most unjustly in falling for their fidelity to a monarch, who if an usurper was in full possession of

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the throne, a king in fact, though not by title. Henry, though refraining from more offensive acts of bloodshed, visited Richard's adherents with tyrannical severity. Even the subservient Parliament, it is said,* hesitated in passing an act of attainder which equalled many of its most barbarous predecessors in rigorous cruelty. The Duke of Norfolk and thirty other lords and gentlemen were included in this stern proscription, strangely accused of high treason against the "royal majesty of King Henry," who at the time of the conflict at Bosworth field was himself a returning outlaw, without name, home, or title, declared a traitor by an act passed with the consent of both houses, and destitute of the slightest claim to the sovereignty which was subsequently conferred on him. †The historian in commenting upon this unequitable measure, bursts forth into an indignant exclamation, "O God, what security can princes have that their subjects will defend their persons in the day of battle, when being forced there perhaps by their absolute commands or threats, the side they fight for, as is often the case, being worsted, they find their own lives and fortunes involved in the common ruin." The attainders which had been passed on Henry's party were reversed, an act which was found to be necessary before a large number of the members of the lower house could take their places. The king stood in the same predicament, and Bacon tells us that when the judges who sate in consultation, discussed the perplexing question which arose on this discovery, it was with unanimous consent resolved, "That the crown takes

* Continuation of Croyla. † Continuation of Croyla.

away all defects and stops in bloud; and that from the time the king did assume the crowne, the fountain was cleared, and all atteindors and corruptions of bloud discharged. But nevertheless for honours sake it was ordained by Parliament, that all records wherein there was any memory or mention of the king's attainder should be defaced, cancelled, and taken off the file." An equally summary method was observed in the restoration of the Princess Elizabeth to the dignities of which Richard had deprived her. The act procured by the late monarch was repealed, the original ordered to be burnt, and all persons possessed of copies were commanded to deliver them to the Lord Chancellor before Easter under heavy penalties. *An act was also passed which restored the dowager queen to her rank as the widow of Edward IV. together with all the rights annexed to her exalted station; but Henry's justice does not appear to have extended to the restitution of her dower, of which no mention is made.

Henry filled the treasury with the fines and confiscations which Parliament had enabled him to impose; and having likewise obtained a resumption of the grants of the crown, he gratified both his avarice and his revenge. The late monarch's favours had been principally conferred upon the partizans of the white rose, and Henry, possessed of absolute power over the most valuable possessions of the Yorkists, confirmed or withdrew the liberal gifts of Richard's hand according to the dictates of interest or of resentment. Previous to the dissolution of Parliament the king acceded to the anxious wishes

* Parliament Rolls.

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of his subjects, and granted a general pardon to all the fugitives of Bosworth field, and other known partizans of the late sovereign, upon condition of their taking the oath of allegiance by an appointed day. Henry, though delaying this gracious measure until its merit was very doubtful, was careful to make it appear that it emanated entirely from his own clemency; neither of the houses were permitted to have a share in procuring the desired benefit; "the king," says Bacon, "thought it not fit it should passe by parliament, the better (being matter of grace) to impropriate the thanks to himself: using only the opportunity of a parliament the better to disperse it into the veines of the kingdom." The royal proclamation was received with joy, numbers issuing out of sanctuary, or hiding-places less safe and convenient, gladly submitted to the proposed condition, and swore fealty to Henry's government.

Henry was particularly sparing in the dispensation of honours; before however the conclusion of the session, he added three of his friends to the lists of the peerage; *Lord Chandos, a nobleman of Bretagne, was made Earl of Bath, Sir Giles Dawbeny created Lord Dawbeny, and Sir Robert Willoughby Lord Brook; at the same time the king restored Edward Stafford, the Duke of Buckingham's heir, to all his father's forfeited titles and estates: an act of gratitude justly due towards one, who, though failing in his immediate purpose, had been the instrument of Henry's advancement to the English throne. Henry paid the loan which he had borrowed from Charles VIII., and redeemed his hostages, Sir

* Bacon.

John Bourchier, and Gray, Marquis of Dorset, from the French court; he sent also for Morton and Fox, the friends of his exile, who had remained upon the continent, and added these learned ecclesiastics to the members of his privy council, who were numerous and selected from the circle of his tried friends. The faithful and diligent Reginald Bray received the honour of knighthood, and was also allotted a place at the private deliberations of his sovereign. Amid numberless evils, the frequent revolutions and changes in the dynasty, effected by the civil wars, produced one beneficial result; offices which had hitherto been jealously monopolized by the higher orders of the nobility, were now open to loyal enterprising and able men of inferior birth: the lofty barriers reared by aristocratic pride were broken down, and humble merit was sometimes permitted to obtain the preference in a rivalship with exalted rank.

Early in the ensuing spring Henry quitted the metropolis upon a progress throughout the northern counties, where he trusted that his presence would obliterate the remembrance of Richard from the minds of the most attached portion of the late monarch's subjects. 1486.

Leland has preserved an interesting document, containing a very animated description of the monarch's journey.* Henry departed from St. John's, attended by a splendid train, and proceeding through Waltham to Cambridge, "wher his Grace was honourably receyvede, both of the Universitie and of the towne," thence took the road through Hunting-

* Leland's Collection, vol. iv.

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don and Stamford to Lincoln, at which place he celebrated the Easter festival: full devoutly, says the narrator, "like a Christine prince." Henry attended divine service twice a day during the high mass, and the even song in the cathedral church, and not in a private chapel, a circumstance which appears to have given great satisfaction: on Holy Thursday he summoned twenty-nine poor men in the Bishop's hall, "to whom he humbly and christenly for Christe's love, with his noble handes did washe their fete, and gave a great almes, like as other his noble progenitors, kings of England, have been accustomed afortyme. Also on Good Friday, after all his offerins and observaunces of halowing of his rings after dinner, gave mervealous great summes of mony in grotes to poore people, besides great almes to poor freres, prisoners, and lazare howses of that country."

During Henry's sojourn in the city of Lincoln, intelligence was brought him that Lord Lovell had flown from the sanctuary at Colchester, together with Humphrey and Thomas Stafford, two relatives of the Duke of Buckingham, whose active vigilance, prompted by the promised spoil of their kinsman's castle, had been the principal means of the failure of the duke's enterprise, and who were consequently exposed to the king's resentment, and exempted from the benefit of the late pardon. The king despising such weak foes, neglected the information and passed on to Nottingham, where he was welcomed by the mayor and chief citizens in scarlet gowns, and processions of the clergy; an embassy from Scotland also met Henry at this place: departing thence upon

his way to York, the royal train was suddenly arrested by the appearance of a band of rebels under Lord Lovel, who had meditated to surprise the king, in the wild hope of avenging Richard's death by the destruction of the triumphant Lancastrian. Henry's retinue, though not prepared for the field, was strong and well appointed; and being at this moment joined by the Earl of Northumberland "with a right great and noble company," his uncle the Duke of Bedford at the head of three thousand men hastily arrayed, and many of these brave soldiers venturing with coats of leather armour instead of the protecting mail, advanced against the enemy. Lovel's forces unable to execute their original intention, and not being supported as they had expected by Richard's northern partizans, found themselves too weak to cope with the royal troops. The king anxious to spare the effusion of blood, tempted the insurgents to forsake their leader by a proclamation which offered pardon to those who should submit: this wise and lenient measure produced the desired effect, "the heralds," says Bacon, "were the great ordnance." Lovel despairing of success permitted his followers to disperse, and fled himself to the residence of Sir Thomas Broughton in Lancashire, whence he found means to escape to the continent, meeting at the court of Margaret, dowager Duchess of Burgundy, a kind reception and a ready ally in new schemes against Henry's government.

The two Staffords had proposed to erect the rebel standard at Worcester, but the failure of Lovel's enterprise obliged them to change their plans; relinquishing an attempt now rendered utterly hopeless,

CHAP. XIV. they sought to obtain sanctuary in the church of Colnham, a village near Abingdon, but even holy ground no longer afforded a safe asylum to these rash insurgents; the privileges of sanctuary were denied to their obscure retreat, and Humphrey Stafford dragged from his place of refuge by an armed force, was tried, condemned, and suffered a traitor's death at Tyburn. The younger criminal was, it is said, received to mercy, having pleaded the influence and controul of his brother in extenuation of his own offence.*

The citizens of York delighting it should seem in the visit of a king, whether he wore the white or the red rose, hastened to pay the same honours to Henry which they had accorded to his unfortunate predecessor. The king mounted on a gallant courser, and arrayed in a gown of cloth of gold furred with ermine, attended by his henchmen, "also in goldsmith's work richly besene," left Tadcaster at the head of his train, accompanied by the sheriffs of the county bearing their white rods before him. Three miles from the city of York the mayor and aldermen, attended by the principal burgesses, "all on horseback," waited to receive their royal guest, the recorder being ready prepared with a speech, offering him welcome, and recommending the city and its inhabitants "to his good grace." Half a mile without the gate Henry was met by an assembly of all the orders of friars, the prior of Trinity with his brethren, the abbot of St. Mary's Abbey with the monks of his convent, the canons of St. Leonard's, and the general procession of ecclesiastics belonging

* Bacon.

to all the parish churches, with "marvellous great number of men, women, and children on foote, which in rejoicing of his comyng, cryen King Henry! King Henry! Our Lorde preserve that swete and well-savourde face." At the city gate the king was greeted by a "pajaunt with dyvers personages and mynstrelsey, and thereby stood a king coronede, which had his speche." And a little farther another of these favourite devices demanded the monarch's admiration, being "garnyshede with shippes and botes on every side, in tokenyng of the kinges landing at Milforde Haven, and Solomon in his habite roiall crownede" was also armed with a speech. Beyond the bridge there was a third pageant of the assumption of the Virgin, who addressed the monarch with a complimentary effusion which would sound profane in modern ears; and at the end of the principal street, upon a stage erected for the purpose, stood King David armed and crowned, and bearing a naked sword. The fronts of the houses were hung with tapestry and other rich draperies; and the delighted spectators as the royal train passed along flung wafers and comfits from the windows "in great quantitie, as it had been hail-stones, for joye and rejoycing of the king's comyng;" acclamations resounded on every side, and the fickle multitude who had so lately shouted loud applause in Richard's ear, now lavished the same adulation upon the triumphant victor who had forcibly deprived him of his crown.

The king proceeded strait to the cathedral, where the archbishop, the dean, and their attendant clergy met him at the west door, and conducted him into

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the body of the church. After divine service had been performed the royal stranger made an offering at the high altar, and at St. William's shrine. Te Deum was then "right melodiously songen," and his orisons concluded, Henry retired to lodgings prepared for him in the archbishop's palace.

The king kept St. George's day at York with great solemnity, wearing the robes of the order of the garter and the cap of maintenance; he was attended at the feast by knights of the garter, and no person except the archbishop was permitted to sit at the royal board, there being six other tables in the same hall for the royal household and the guests. The heralds, according to the custom upon grand occasions, were marshalled upon a raised platform, and proclaimed the monarch's largess three times, with his style and titles.

Henry, during a residence of three weeks in the capital of the north, gave the citizens abundant marks of royal favour, and received in return assurances of affectionate loyalty, whose sincerity was speedily evinced by the trying events of the following year.

The king returned to the south through Worcester, Gloucester, Hereford, and Bristol; the former of these cities, probably on account of some encouragement afforded to the Staffords, was visited with stern indications of displeasure: the authorities had prepared a pageant of Henry III., who was to have pronounced a welcome to his kinsman, "which his Grace at that tyme," says the herald, "harde not:" but sunshine returned to the monarch's brow at Hereford, where there was a pageant of St. George

at the gate, and another at the cross in the market-place, of a king and two bishops with appropriate speeches; and at the entrance of the cathedral, "a pajaunt of our Lady with many virgins, mervealous and richly beseene." Henry was spared both speeches and pageants at Gloucester; but at Bristol all the taste and talent of the city was put in requisition to aid an enthusiastic welcome; the mayor, the sheriffs, and the aldermen, with the principal citizens on horseback, and the recorder, appeared at the distance of three miles, the latter being as usual the orator appointed to address the king; performing, as we are told, his office "right conyngly."* Processions of friars were in attendance upon a causeway within the gate of the suburbs: and at the entrance of the city there was a pageant, accompanied by great melody and singing, and King Bremmius also with a speech, together with many other fantastic devices, "mervealously well done," displaying the skill of ingenious artizans, which were prepared to delight the royal eye; "an olifaunte with a castell on his back, the resurrection of our Lord in the highest tower thereof, with certayne imagerye smytyng belles;" and the shipwrights' pageant, with "praty concerts playing in the same," were amid the most splendid of these exhibitions. The poverty of the city being however apparent through all this studied magnificence, Henry sent for the mayor and the most respectable burgesses to inquire the cause; "and," says the historian, "they shewed his Grace for the great losse of shippes and goodes within five years. The king comforted

* Leland's Collection, vol. iv.

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theym that they shulde sett on and make new shippes, and exercise their marchandize as they were wont to do, and he shulde so help them by divers meanes lyke as he shewed unto them." Delighted by this kindness and condescension, the mayor declared "that they harde not this hundred yeres of noo king so good a comfort. Wherfor they thanked Almighty God, that hath sent theym so good and graciouse a souveraigne lord."

Henry seems to have created a jubilee wheresoever he appeared; the sheriffs of each county through which he passed attended him upon his progress, and at every stage the provincial gentry flocked about him, and were received with flattering courtesy; assembled round the monarch's festal board, the guests departed charmed with their sovereign's hospitality. These convivial meetings won the hearts of the higher classes; and distinguished for his devout attendance at divine service, all ranks entertained a favourable opinion of Henry's piety, and indeed nothing seems to have been wanting to complete a well merited popularity, save the presence of his gentle and beautiful consort, ungenerously denied a participation in the gratifying triumphs of the hour.

The royal train proceeded eastwards to Sheen, and as it passed through the large towns and near the rich abbeys, both the laity and the ecclesiastics made offerings according to their wealth of silver and gold, wine, beads, and mittins, manifestations of loyalty very usual in these times, and exceedingly acceptable to needy or to rapacious sovereigns, who were always ready to receive the donations of their

subjects. The Lord Mayor of London apprized of Henry's approach assembled the barges belonging to the city companies, and rowed up to Putney at the head of a gay and splendid flotilla to meet and welcome the king, who performed the last part of his progress by water, and surrounded by gilded vessels, a stately show, now entirely lost to the beautiful river so excellently adapted for aquatic processions, floated down the broad waters of the Thames in regal magnificence to Westminster, where he landed after an absence which had made him acquainted with a large portion of the nation to whom he had previously been a total stranger.

The queen in the interim kept her court in great retirement at Winchester; most happily fitted for domestic life, she gracefully submited to her husband's will, and forgetful of her own superior claims to the throne, never attempted to divide the sovereignty with a monarch who, until either won by her mild obedience, or alarmed by the murmurs of the people, refused to grant her the honour of a coronation: an impolitic and invidious exclusion, which although meekly borne by his truly feminine partner, was deeply resented throughout the whole of the extensive party who favoured the House of York.

Elizabeth in the bosom of her own family, and enjoying the tenderest attentions of maternal solicitude from the king's mother, the Countess of Richmond and Derby, looked forward to the birth of an infant, whom she fondly hoped would be destined to unite the long jarring claims of the white and the red rose. The most splendid preparations were made

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for the reception of this fair bud of promise under the immediate direction of the Countess of Richmond. The decorations of modern taste, though probably more elegant, were exceeded in magnificence by the costly furniture of the queen's chamber. *The counterpane of the bed was of scarlet, furred with ermine, and embroidered with crimson velvet on rich cloth of gold; there was also a "mevertouse," of fine lawn, and a "sparver" of crimson satin, embroidered with crowns of gold, the arms of the king and queen and other devices, and fringed with silk and gold: the cushions were of crimson damask cloth of gold, and two bowls of the same precious metal were set within the chamber.

On St. Eustachius' day, September, 1436, the fair Elizabeth brought forth a son. Henry in compliment to his Welsh friends, and in support of his pretended descent from the most celebrated of Britain's early kings, determined to give his heir the name of Arthur. The English nation delighting in the chivalric adventures and wonderful exploits which the fables of antiquity had ascribed to that renowned personage, anticipated a renewal of the glorious days so eloquently delineated in the fond record of Arthur's splendid career: and attributing the same confidence in these romantic legends to neighbouring kingdoms, indulged a flattering hope that all Christendom shared in the expectation of some extraordinary accession of power to the English throne under a monarch so fortunately distinguished. We are gravely told by one of the elder historians that at the christening of the young prince by the

* Leland's Collection, vol. iv.

auspicious appellation of "Arthur," outward nations and foreign princes trembled and quaked, so much was that name to all terrible and fearful.* CHAP. XIV.

† The ceremonial of the baptism of England's heir was conducted with great splendour in the cathedral church of Winchester, the body of the edifice being hung with cloth of arras, and a new and magnificent font of silver gilt, prepared expressly for the occasion, raised upon a spacious platform covered with red say, and surmounted by a rich canopy terminating in a large gilt ball. The platform was railed round at a convenient distance, each entrance being kept by five yeomen of the crown, and when the ceremony of hallowing the font, which was performed by a prelate, had taken place, it was given in charge of two knights and four esquires of the king's body guard. At the head of the procession appeared a train of henchmen, esquires, gentlemen, and yeomen of the crown, two and two, bearing unlighted torches; after them the ecclesiastics and choristers belonging to the chapter, then a company of knights and gentlemen, followed by the kings of arms, heralds, pursuivants, and serjeants, carrying their coats of office. Two silver gilt basins which had been delivered by the treasurer to Lord Strange, were borne after the Earl of Derby and the Lord Maltravers, also an unlighted taper; the salt in a splendid gold vessel, and a rich "cresome," which was pinned on the right breast of Lady Anne, sister of the queen, and hung over her left arm: the fair bearer being supported by Sir Richard Gilford, and Sir John Turbervile,

* Grafton. † Leland's Collection, vol. iv.

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the constable and marshal, carrying their staves of office; next came the Lady Cecill, another of the queen's sisters, to whom, wrapped in a mantle of crimson cloth of gold, furred with ermine, was entrusted the babe so precious to the nation; the young and royal nurse was supported on either side by the Marquis of Dorset and the Earl of Lincoln; the wife of the former, assisted by Sir John Cheyny, held her train, and the canopy was borne by Sir Edward Wydeville, Lord Delawar, the son and heir of Lord Audely, and Sir John Arundel; a splendid assemblage of the ladies of the court followed, and the dowager queen, attended by three prelates, arrayed in their pontifical habits, with many other dignified ecclesiastics and doctors in rich copes, awaited inside the church to receive the procession; which, after a delay of three hours, occasioned by the expectation of the Earl of Oxford's arrival, proceeded to the font by order of the king.

The Earl of Derby, the Lord Maltravers, and the queen's mother were the sponsors, and during the ceremony, the officers at arms put on their emblazoned coats, and the torches were lighted. At the completion of the rite the queen laid her grandson upon the high altar, and after prayer had been said and an anthem sung, the Earl of Oxford, who was now in attendance, took the young prince in his arms, and the Bishop of Exeter performed the ceremony of confirmation; then the Marquis of Dorset, the Earl of Lincoln, and the Lord Strange presented towels and water to the queen to wash, and two gentlemen attended upon the other sponsors. The ablutions being finished, the royal company made their

offerings; the queen gave a rich cup of gold with a cover, which was borne by Sir David Owen; the Earl of Oxford, a pair of gilt basins; the Earl of Derby, a costly saltcellar of gold; and the Lord Maltravers, a gold coffer, all presented by the hands of knights. From the high altar, the prince was conducted to St. Swithin's shrine, where a second offering was made, and after the anthem and Te Deum had been "solempnely songen," the nobles and ladies were served "with spices and ipocrasse, with other swete wines great plentie." All the ceremonials now being accomplished, the royal infant was borne by Lady Cecill as before, the procession returning in the same order, except that the torches were burning and the omission of the basins and the taper. Two pipes of wine were broached in the church yard and offered freely to the rejoicing spectators; a burst of trumpets and minstrelsy greeted the infant prince upon his entrance into the palace, and being borne into the presence of the king and queen, "the fair child," says our chronicler, "had the blessings of Almighty God, our Lady, and St. George, and of his father and mother."

The splendid victory of Bosworth Field had rendered the whole nation acquiescent in Henry's succession to the throne; there was no great leader left of Richard's party to rally the few who might still be opposed to the claim of the Lancastrian; and the imprisonment of the Earl of Warwick obliged his partizans to suspend their exertions until a more favourable period. The new king reaped the benefit of every iniquitous measure pursued by his predecessor; the fall of Rivers and Hastings, the murder

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of the young princes, and the captivity of Warwick had cleared the way for an ambitious aspirant, and his success, together with the pomp and pageantry attending it, dazzled the public eye and produced temporary submission; but the calm which succeeded was of short duration; the defects in Henry's title, notwithstanding the boldness of his plea of inheritance, and the authority of a papal bull which he obtained at his marriage, threatening excommunication to those who might at any future period attempt to disturb him or his posterity in the possession of their rights, were too apparent to escape notice. Henry's unwillingness to submit to the superior claims of Elizabeth involved him in difficulties. Had the king exposed the artifices of Stillington, the invalidity of the alleged pre-contract between Edward IV. and Lady Eleanor Boteler, and procured indubitable evidence of the death of young Edward and his brother, he would have deprived his adversaries of their strongest hold; but in clinging to the Lancastrian title he gave ample scope to the ingenuity of malicious commentators, and invested the younger branches of the House of York with so dangerous a pre-eminence that it was not until their blood had been shed on the field, and on the scaffold, that his tottering throne was made secure. The continual triumphs achieved by factious and discontented men against the government encouraged vivid expectations from the wildest schemes; the fierce ambition hitherto confined to the nobility, had descended to a lower rank; opportunities of aggrandizement were presented during the revulsions occasioned by civil war, which peace did not afford, and the state

of excitation produced by the struggles of rival princes was too congenial to unquiet spirits to be easily relinquished for the dull detail of common life. Anxiously desirous to plunge the realm into new convulsions, the early part of Henry's reign was disturbed by the artful projects of puny but inveterate enemies, who maintained a long and extraordinary conflict with the crown, by a series of plausible inventions which followed each other in rapid succession. No sooner was one of these webs unravelled by Henry's promptitude and diligence, than they wove another still more perplexed and inextricable. Henry's crown was twice placed in jeopardy by the arms of an impostor. It is impossible to trace the exact source whence the extraordinary design of setting up a false Plantagenet originated; the idea is ascribed to a priest at Oxford, but that the wild speculation of so obscure an individual, prompted, as Bacon tells us, by the hope of being raised to "some great bishoprick," should obtain even a chance of success, exceeds probability: he doubtless acted from the suggestions of more powerful persons.* A boy between ten and eleven years old, suddenly appeared in Dublin under the protection of an ecclesiastic named Richard Symons; a rumour being spread abroad in England at the same time, that the young Duke of York had escaped the machinations of his uncle, and had landed in Ireland; but whether the priest intended in the first instance that his pupil should personate Richard's victim, and afterwards changed his plans, or that the people, deeply interested in the fate of this

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* Bacon.

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unhappy boy, and anxious to believe what they wished to be true, on hearing that a fugitive prince had arrived in Ireland, reported him to be the Duke of York on mere conjecture, is not known: but Symons presented the youth to the lord deputy of Ireland as Edward Plantagenet, the son of Clarence, and implored him to succour an unfortunate descendant of the House of York, who had flown from the dangers which had awaited him in the Tower of London.* Symons had very judiciously chosen Ireland as the scene of his earliest operations; the family of Mortimer and its representatives of the line of York, had been entrusted with the government of that country for a long series of years. Nearly all the English settlers, accustomed to the government of Duke Richard and that of his maternal ancestors, were decided partizans of the white rose; and Henry, though aware of this bias, did not deem it prudent to displace the officers of state by the friends of the house of Lancaster: but on the occurrence of some suspicious circumstance reported by the watchful spies which he had posted to observe the proceedings of the Irish council, he summoned the Earl of Kildare to attend his court in England. This nobleman's refusal, though under the pretext that his presence was absolutely necessary in Ireland, increased Henry's jealousy, and it was with more alarm than surprise that he heard of the countenance which the earl had afforded to an hostile adventurer. Lambert Simnel, the instrument selected for the most extraordinary project ever recorded in history, was a handsome, intelligent lad, possessed of considerable talent, and therefore very

* Grafton. Pol. Virg.

capable of performing his allotted part with skill and grace. Ably tutored by persons whose intimate acquaintance with the Plantagenets rendered them competent to furnish him with very minute instructions, the feigned narrative of his adventures deceived the credulous, whilst many individuals interested in the success of his imposture appeared to believe, and admitted his claims without question or dispute. That the Earl of Kildare could be duped by the representations of an unknown and mean ecclesiastic, a young man only twenty-seven years old, who approached him with a most improbable tale, is not credible: but without inquiring how Edward Plantagenet came to be entrusted to such strange guardianship, or whether Henry's prisoner had in reality escaped from the Tower, he entered at once into the impostor's views, announced him publicly as the heir of Clarence, and by the weight of his authority procured a very general admission of the dubious claims asserted by the pretender and his artful colleague. The youth acknowledged, with a few exceptions by the nobility, gentry, and the common people, was proclaimed king, being styled Edward VI. King of England and France, and Lord of Ireland.*

Henry hastened to unveil the imposture, lest the English also should share in the delusion which prevailed throughout the sister kingdom; he made diligent inquiries concerning the birth and parentage of the alleged Plantagenet, and discovered that he was the son of a joiner.† The name and origin of Lambert Simnel, blazoned abroad by the king's com-

* Bacon. Pol. Virg. † Parliament Rolls.

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mand, became generally known, and Henry exposed the deception even more effectually, by causing the Earl of Warwick to ride from the Tower in procession through the streets, full in the view of assembled thousands. After being thus shewn to the citizens, Warwick bade adieu for a time to his gloomy prison, and conducted to the palace of Sheen, was placed under more gentle restriction, and introduced to the nobles of the court, with whom he conversed daily. These measures, though abundantly satisfactory to the English, failed to convince their more enthusiastic neighbours, who tenaciously adhering to the belief in the marvellous tale so attractive to vivid imaginations, resolutely maintained that they were in possession of the true heir of Clarence, and that Henry had imposed a false Plantagenet upon his credulous subjects.*

The king, although surrounded by the chief nobility of England, was compelled from the experience of all his predecessors, both of York and Lancaster, to place more reliance upon his own prudence than upon the fidelity of these vacillating friends; he knew not the moment in which disgust or caprice might deprive him of the support of the very persons to whom he had been indebted for his exaltation, and therefore he sought to attach the great body of the people to his interests, by an act of tardy but most welcome clemency: he published a second pardon, extending to every species of treason, more full and unconditional than the last, which had been rendered null in many instances by impolitic restrictions, and from its frequent violations was not re-

* Bacon.

garded as a sufficient safeguard from the danger of a jealous king's resentment. This measure restored public confidence, and though it could not check the unwearied attempts of factious men, it deprived them of many supporters, who would have been driven into the ranks of rebellion from their hopelessness of security under a harsh and vindictive government. With the exception of the Earl of Warwick, whom he dreaded as a rival, and Lord Lovell, whom no representations could induce him to pardon, Henry had latterly endeavoured to conciliate the great leaders of the Yorkist party. The Earl of Lincoln, notwithstanding the perilous distinction conferred by Richard, was immediately received into favour; and Surrey, though maintaining the conflict at Bosworth to the last, only endured a short confinement in the Tower. The earl's liberation is imputed to a speech which he is said to have made either at the period of his surrender, or during his subsequent imprisonment. When reproached for his adherence to Richard, he declared, "that he upheld the crown, and not the man;" saying also, "that if the English diadem were even to be placed upon a hedge-stake, a Howard would die in its defence."* Such a sentiment could not fail to please the ear of a reigning monarch; it was reported to Henry, who stood in need of supporters, thus indifferent respecting the merits of the white or the red rose; and Surrey seems to have acted up to a principle perfectly novel in those days of stubborn devotion to a party and a name.

The Earl of Lincoln, proud of the high destiny to

* Camden.

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which Richard's favour had designed him, could not brook the disappointment of his lofty hopes; impatient to produce new changes, he revolted from the king with fatal ingratitude. The kindness accorded by Henry VII. to a nobleman who had been proclaimed the presumptive heir of his predecessor, affords a solitary instance of toleration to a rival, however remote, occurring throughout a dreary space, from the fall of Henry VI. to the death of the last victim to royal jealousy, the Lady Arabella Stuart, and the conduct of the earl in this ungenerous return to liberality so praiseworthy and so rare, in some degree justified the barbarous precautions which Henry and his descendants adopted for the preservation of the crown. Lincoln quitted England and repaired to the court of his aunt, Margaret, Duchess dowager of Burgundy, the second sister of Edward IV. "This princesse," says Bacon, "(having the spirit of a man and the malice of a woman), abounding in treasure by the greatness of her dower and her provident government, and being childless, and without any nearer care, made it her design and enterprise to see the majesty royal of England once again replaced in her house, and had set up King Henry as a marke, at whose overthrow all her actions should ayme and shoot." Margaret, bearing towards the Lancastrians the implacable enmity imputed to feminine hatred, entered with avidity into her kinsman's plans.

The Earl of Lincoln, who had seen and conversed with Edward Plantagenet at Sheen, and must have been fully aware of Lambert Simnel's imposture (if it had not been originally planned at his instiga-

tion), prepared to join the malecontents in Ireland. In setting up a counterfeit Warwick he hoped to attract the secret friends of the white rose to his standard, and in the event of a victory over Henry, he might either release his unfortunate cousin from confinement, or advance his own pretensions to the throne. The ambitious noble found a ready coadjutor in Lord Lovel; they settled their plans with Margaret, and having obtained two thousand foreign soldiers under Martin Swartz, a distinguished commander, the confederates sailed to Dublin, where, as the partizans of Edward Plantagenet, they received a joyful welcome.

Lincoln, anxious to invest the instrument of his ambition with all the pomp of regal dignity, urged the Irish council to add a coronation to the honours already conferred upon Lambert Simnel, trusting that this imposing ceremony would exalt the impostor in the public eye, and convince the ignorant and credulous that his claims were too strong to be denied. The earl's associates readily agreed to the proposition, and preparations were made in Dublin for the celebration of the unwonted rite; a diadem, taken from an image of the virgin,* furnished a part of the regal paraphernalia; and the Bishop of Meath lending his assistance to this solemn farce, Lambert was publicly crowned according to the ancient Irish custom,† being after the conclusion of the ceremony borne upon the shoulders of a chieftain from the church to the castle, whence he summoned a parliament, and took upon himself the state and authority of a king.‡

* Hall. † Pol. Virg. ‡ Rymer.

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Lambert Simnel's reign was however of short duration; the country which had been chosen for his assumption of regal honours could ill support the expense of a court and an army; and Lincoln, bold, active, adventurous, impatient of delay, and eager to try his fortune in England, assembled the native soldiers who had been enlisted in the impostor's service, and with his foreign auxiliaries set sail and landed upon the Lancashire coast.

The proceedings in Ireland were calculated to impress Henry with very serious apprehensions. The defection of Lincoln, after having received satisfactory proof that Edward Plantagenet's name had been assumed for the most treasonable purpose, infused dark suspicions into the king's mind, and caused him to doubt the loyalty of others; remembering Dorset's former double dealing, he placed him under temporary confinement in the Tower. This nobleman, probably never very high in Henry's estimation, might have been treated with indifference and neglect, and the king, conscious that he had some ground for resentment, prevented its most fatal ebullition by securing his person until the temptation had vanished.

Henry's conduct to his mother-in-law, the widow of Edward IV. upon this occasion, was somewhat mysterious; she also, not permitted to be at large during the disquietude of the country, was conducted to the Abbey of Bermondsey; several of the old writers aver that her goods were confiscated, and that she languished for a few years in great misery, and died a prisoner in this convent; but of the truth of the former statement there is no suffi-

cient proof, and the latter is certainly wholly unfounded.

Henry's reserved temper in concealing the motives for his actions, gave rise to numberless conjectures, and necessarily occasioned infinite misrepresentation: a more frank and open disposition would have rescued his character from much undeserved censure; but compelled from his earliest youth to adopt the strictest caution, he became habitually wary; and knowing from experience that Richard's most secret councils had been betrayed, he made few confidents, and selected those only who could be safely trusted. It has been said that the queen dowager was imprisoned in consequence of having delivered her daughters out of sanctuary into the hands of Richard, and that this charge was invented to conceal her participation in the present plot: and were it not that her favour with the king, both at the christening of his son, and afterwards in the negociations with Scotland, is too strongly manifested to admit the assurance of her disgrace, Henry's denial of a coronation to her daughter, and studied depression of the Yorkist's party, would warrant the supposition that she had sacrificed prudence to revenge, in leaguing with the disaffected to overturn the government; but had Elizabeth evinced a tendency of so dangerous a nature, she never could have been reinstated in Henry's good opinion, or have received those marks of respectful attention which will be related hereafter, and which shewed how earnestly he desired to promote her interests.

The king, when informed of the preparations which had been made in Ireland for an invasion,

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visited the counties of Essex, Suffolk, and Norfolk, in order that the presence of the sovereign might counteract the influence which the Earl of Lincoln possessed in the vicinity of his patrimonial estates, and to guard those ports which appeared to offer the readiest facilities for landing; but Lincoln steered his course to the north, and disembarked on the fourth of June, with his German and Irish followers, at Furness, whence marching to Swartmore, near Ulverstone, he pitched his camp, awaiting the arrival of Sir Thomas Broughton, who joined the insurgents at the head of his retainers. The earl hoped to obtain considerable reinforcements in Yorkshire, and directed his route through this suspected county; but convinced of Lambert Simnel's imposture, and disliking the foreign mercenaries in his train, all persons of respectability refused to unite themselves to an enterprise which offered so faint a promise of success, and the dregs and refuse of society were the only volunteers who were attracted by Lincoln's banners.*

Henry in the interim had moved to Kenilworth Castle, a fortress which he had selected for the residence of his queen and his mother. The friends of the government flocked round the king, and he was soon at the head of a considerable force: the gallant and faithful Oxford asked and obtained the command of the army, and moving through Coventry and Loughborough, it was joined at Nottingham by Lord Strange, and his family retainers.

Henry maintained strict discipline amidst his troops, very copious directions for "the goode rule

* Bacon.

of his hooste"* were published throughout the army, which peremptorily forbade those excesses which had been but too common in time of war. "All personal outrages offered to the king's subjects were declared to be punishable with death, and offenders convicted of riotous conduct, insubordination, or other less flagrant misdemeanours, were threatened with imprisonment. Henry also commanded the apprehension of all vagabonds and abandoned women, who should be found in the army after the promulgation of his orders for their dismissal, and being strictly obeyed in this particular, we are told by Leland that at Leicester and Loughborough "the stokks and prisonns were reasonably fylled."

The Earl of Lincoln's forces amounted to eight thousand men, but these chiefly consisted of the Irish auxiliaries, who were ill provided either with offensive or defensive armour; disappointed in the expected aid from northern disaffection, yet still resolute to hazard a battle, he advanced in the hope of surprising Henry before he had completed his preparations.

The two armies met at Stoke, a mile beyond Newark. The insurgents by the direction of Swartz, an accomplished soldier, were advantageously posted on the brow of a hill. Henry's troops were drawn up in three divisions, and the vanguard under the Earl of Oxford, rushed vigorously to the attack. Maintaining their ground with invincible courage, and yielding only to the death-strokes of their foes, the Irish and German soldiers sustained the unequal conflict for the space of three hours; the former furnished only with their native weapons "darts and

* Leland's Collection, vol. iv.

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skeans," were no match for their heavily armed antagonists; they were cut down on all sides, their commander, Lord Gerardine, falling amidst heaps of his devoted countrymen; the latter, too few for conquest, and too brave to submit, held the conflict for a short time doubtful, but their desperate efforts were made in vain, they shared the fate of their unfortunate associates; the gallant Martin Swartz and the intrepid Lincoln were stretched upon the bloody field, and the combat, which is described by Bacon to have been a slaughter rather than a battle, was ended by the utter destruction of one of the opposing hosts.

Holingshed commends the valour of the insurgents in the highest terms: "The Almains beeying tryed and experte menne of warre, were in all thynges as well in strengthe as pollicie egall and matches to the Englishemenne. But as for Martine Swarde theyr colonell, few of the Englishemenne, eyther in valiannt courage or strength and nimblenesse of body was to him comparable. On the other side the Irishemen, although they foughte manfully, and stuck to it valiantly, yet because they were, after the manner of their country, almost naked, without any convenient furniture of armour, they were striken down and slayne lyke dull and brute beasts, which was a great discouragement to the residue of the company."

June 16, 1487. Richard Symons, the intriguing priest, with his pupil, were taken prisoners. Lord Lovel, whose body was not found amidst the slain, was supposed to have made his escape, but if he survived this sanguinary action, it was only to perish miserably in some obscure retreat, for he was never seen again.

Sir Thomas Broughton, whose death upon the field is likewise doubtful, also disappeared, being compelled to adopt the closest concealment in order to preserve his forfeit life. Thus all the commanders attached to this luckless enterprise were swept away, and the red rose a second time triumphant, regained its former glories.

The king, though strongly supported against Lincoln and his followers, was aware that many persons whom he had summoned to the field held themselves aloof, abiding the issue of the battle before they declared for either side. These dubious partizans alleged in excuse for their tardiness, a report which had gone forth "that the rebels had the day, and that the king's army was overthrown, and the king fled."* Henry, dissembling his anger, deemed it expedient to accept this apology; it taught him the danger of offending the Yorkists, and he did not neglect so salutary a lesson.

The victory at Stoke was not stained with blood. Henry delighted more in fines and confiscations than in the scaffold and the axe; and did not like Edward IV. unite murder with pillage: even the life of the traitor Symons was spared; he confessed the imposture before the convocation, and was punished by an imprisonment which ended only with the termination of his existence: the youthful instrument of his delusive artifices was treated with extraordinary clemency. Henry, content with degrading the boy, who crowned and anointed as king had endangered the safety of the realm, employed him as a scullion in the meanest offices

* Bacon.

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appertaining to the royal kitchen. Lambert Simnel conducted himself with exemplary propriety in the station assigned him by the king, and Henry graciously noticed the youth's demeanour and rewarded it by a higher appointment, he became one of the king's falconers.*

Henry spent the remainder of the summer in the north, levying fines and endeavouring to ascertain the disposition of the inhabitants towards his government, and being convinced that if he hoped for tranquillity he must no longer trifle with the jealous feelings of the Yorkist party, he directed that preparations should be made for the queen's coronation. This popular measure, though too long delayed, was not ungracefully conceded; previous to the gratifying ceremony, the king released the Marquis of Dorset from confinement, and her brother's restoration to favour enabled the meek Elizabeth to enjoy her triumph without alloy.

The welcome which Henry received upon his entrance into London proved how deeply the people were interested in the honour and happiness of his amiable consort, every heart rejoiced in the promised exaltation of the white rose, and greeted with affectionate enthusiasm the monarch who no longer refused to grant the earnest desire of Edward IV.'s faithful subjects: immense multitudes eagerly pressed forwards to behold their king returning in triumph from the scene of his late victory. The lord mayor, the sheriffs, and the aldermen, with a deputation from the different city companies, all on horseback, and arrayed in their liveries, advanced

* Hall.

to meet their sovereign on the road to Barnet: and Henry graciously conferred the honour of knighthood upon the chief magistrate and one of his companions. The streets through which the royal procession was to pass, on its way from Bishopsgate to St. Paul's Church, had been carefully swept, and were lined on either side with men in livery, belonging to the different crafts.* The Archbishop of Canterbury, together with several other prelates, received the king at the entrance of the cathedral, and as he approached the altar he was greeted by an angel, the ingenious device of the reverend brethren of the church, who descending from the roof, swung the great censer over the head of majesty. Having made his offerings, Henry after the performance of divine service, took up his residence at the bishop's palace; and the queen, who with the Countess of Richmond, had secretly enshrined herself in a house in the suburbs, in order to enjoy the sight of her victorious husband's return, proceeded to Greenwich to prepare for her own triumphal entry. CHAP. XIV.

On the following Friday, accompanied by a numerous train of nobles and ladies, richly attired, Elizabeth embarked upon the Thames. Upon this festive occasion the gilded pleasure vessels belonging to the city companies, were in attendance, gaily painted, and decorated with emblazoned banners, pennons, and streamers of silk, and manned by the lord mayor, the sheriffs, the aldermen, and the principal burgesses, each striving to outvie the other in the splendour of his galley: one in particular Nov. 23, 1487.

* Leland's Collection, vol. iv.

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surpassed the rest, called by distinction, the "bachelors' barge," "wherein was ordeyned a great red dragon spouting flames of fire into the Thames." Also we are told, that "many other gentilmanly pajants were curiously devised to do her highness sport and pleasure." The loud and exhilarating minstrelsy of trumpets and clarions, accompanied the stately regatta as it floated majestically up the river to the Tower, where Henry, in waiting with the lords of his court, delighted the spectators by the gracious and affectionate reception with which he greeted the gentle partner of his throne.* The king the same day created fourteen knights of the bath, and on the following morning the queen, attended by a magnificent procession, was conducted in great pomp through the city to Westminster. Young and beautiful, her native loveliness increased by the delicacy and elegance of her attire, Elizabeth, fair as the emblem of her house, and arrayed in a white kyrtle of cloth of gold of Damascus, and a mantle of the same splendid materials, furred with ermine, and fastened on her breast with a richly wrought lace, knobbed and tasseled with gold; a diadem set with precious stones encircling her brow, and her faire yellow hair waving luxuriantly over her shoulders, was drawn through the streets in a superb litter, covered with cloth of gold, having a canopy of the same glittering drapery borne over her head by four knights, and followed by a splendid train of the

* The king's highnesse welcomede her in such manner and forme as was to all the estates and others there being present, a very good sight, and right joyous and comfortable to behold.—*Leland's Collection*, vol. iv.

ladies of her court, some reclining in carriages, and others mounted upon grey palfreys, a fair and sparkling pageant. The houses were hung with tapestry, and the streets of the city were lined by the artificers in their liveries belonging to the different crafts, and groupes of children robed in virgin white, or arrayed like angels, sang sweet songs as the procession passed. Before the litter rode the Duke of Bedford, appointed to hold the office of Grand Steward of England during the feast of the coronation, the Earl of Oxford as great chamberlain, and the Earls of Derby and Nottingham as the constable and marshal. These noblemen were preceded by the Lord Mayor of London, attended by two esquires of honour in gowns of crimson velvet, and mantles of ermine, and two lacqueys on foot. Next rode the Duke of Suffolk, with other lords; before them a troop of heralds and pursuivants, then the new made knights of the bath riding two and two "in their blue bachelor gowns," with banners flying, and in the front a splendid company of knights bannerets and esquires. Sir Roger Cotton, the master of the queen's horse, led a fair palfry, beautifully caparisoned for a lady, immediately behind the queen's litter, "which," says the chronicler, "by the opinion of divers heralds," should have been preceded by the six henchmen, who followed upon white horses, harnessed with cloth of gold studded with white roses and suns, the emblems of the House of York, in rich embroidery. Then came the queen's train of ladies. The Lady Cecill, the Duchesses of Bedford, Suffolk, and Norfolk, and the Countess of

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Oxford were seated in two chairs covered with cloth of gold; behind them six baronesses on beautiful palfreys, arrayed in gowns of crimson velvet, and the procession was closed by henchmen and gentlewomen belonging to the queen and the principal nobility, either gallantly mounted, or in chairs; the ladies, we are told, being "richly besene with great beads and chains of gold about their necks in marvellous great number."*

1487. On the morrow, Sunday the twenty-fifth of November, Elizabeth walked to her coronation arrayed in a kyrtle and mantle of regal purple velvet, furred with the kingly ermine, a circlet of gold richly set with pearls and precious stones upon her head, and her train borne by her sister, the Lady Cecill. Thus splendidly attired the queen stood under a canopy in Westminster Hall until the procession was arranged, which commenced in the accustomed manner with a troop of esquires, followed by the new made knights of the bath magnificently clad in silks of various hues; next came the barons and other noblemen according to their rank, and after them the bishops in their pontifical habits, with a long train of priors, abbotts, and other ecclesiastics, all in their stately and picturesque robes; when these had passed on, the Archbishop of York appeared, walking singly, followed by garter king at arms, then the Lord Mayor of London, preceding the constable and marshal, and to these succeeded the Earl of Arundel bearing the ivory dove-crowned wand, the Duke of Suffolk with the sceptre, and the Earl of Oxford in his state robes, having in his hand his staff of office.

* Leland's Collection, vol. iv.

The Duke of Bedford, also decked in his magnificent attire as grand steward of England, and bareheaded, was entrusted with the long-withheld crown, bearing it on a splendid cushion, he walked immediately before the fair heiress of York, who supported by the Bishops of Winchester and Ely, moved under a canopy borne by the barons of the Cinque Ports. The ladies of the court closed the long and glittering line, the duchesses wearing jewelled diadems upon their heads, and those of lesser rank circlets of gold set with gems. The heralds and sergeants-of-arms surrounded the procession on all sides, in the vain endeavour to keep off the crowd, whose cupidity being tempted by the valuable woollen cloth which had been laid down for the queen to walk upon, rushed forwards to seize the prize; the disgraceful attempt was not to be repelled without bloodshed; "certeyne persons," says our Chronicler, "were slain, and the order of the ladies following the queen, broken and distrobled." The Archbishop of Canterbury performed the ceremony, which was witnessed by the king and the Countess of Richmond his mother, from a latticed pavilion erected for the purpose in a convenient spot near the high altar. After the queen had retired to her chamber, the hall was cleared by the Duke of Bedford, the Earl of Derby, and the Earl of Nottingham, mounted upon goodly coursers richly trapped, the housings of the duke's charger being studded with red roses and dragons, bordered with "goldsmith's work," and those of the Earl of Derby's horse so cunningly embroidered with his arms as to call forth the admira-

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tion of the describer. The first quarter we are told was "a lion gules, having a man's head in a bicokett of silver, the second a lion sable, the trapper was right curiously wrought with the needle, for the manne's visage in the bicokett shewed very well favoured;" the caparisons of the Earl of Nottingham's horse were of cloth of gold, and both his companions wore the ornament, apparently so highly valued in these days, the Duke of Bedford having "a rich chain of gold about his neck," and the Earl of Derby "a marvellous rich chain of gold" folded many times over his shoulders. The retinue of these noblemen armed with staves assisted to keep order, and when the feast was spread and the queen had taken her place, two ladies went under the table and seated themselves at her feet, while two countesses kneeling on either side attended with a handkerchief, which it was their office when directed to hold before her.*

The only guests at the queen's board were the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Duchess of Bedford, and the Lady Cecill: the other tables in the hall were surrounded by the nobles spiritual and temporal, knights, citizens, law officers, and ecclesiastics, according to their precedence, and the ladies of the court; the latter being seated by themselves on the left side of the building. The kings at arms, heralds, and pursuivants, and the trumpeters and minstrels were assembled upon raised platforms, and a latticed recess was prepared for the king outside one of the windows, from which he could behold all the ceremonial of the banquet. A burst of music announced

* Leland's Collection, vol. iv.

the entrance of the first course, which was preceded by the serjeants of arms, the comptroller, and treasurer, with the Duke of Bedford, and the Earls of Derby and Nottingham, on horseback. The Lord Fitzwalter, as sewer, in his surcoat with tabard sleeves, served the dishes to the queen, which were all borne by knights. Those which were placed before the archbishop, were, says the narrator, "borne by esquires, or should have been." Amongst the dainties enumerated are "carpe in foile," perch dypt in jelly, "a peacock in hakell," and a viand unknown to the present age, garnished with lozenges of gold. After the second course, which was served in the same manner as the first, the kings at arms, heralds, and pursuivants, made an obeisance to the queen; and garter, in the name of all, returned thanks to his royal mistress in these words: "Right hight and myghty prince, most noble and excellent princesse, most cristen queen, and al our most dred and souvereigne liege ladye, we the officers of armes and servants to al nobles, beseeche Almighty God to thank you for the great and habundaunt largesse whiche your grace hath given us in the honour of your most honourable and right wise coronation, and to send you grace to live in honour and virtue." Afterwards the same officer cried largesse in three several places in the hall, and attended by his brethren, drank at the cupboard where the Earl of Arundel stood as chief butler. * The hall then resounded with minstrelsy, the torches were lighted, and the queen being served with fruit and

* Leland's Collection, vol. iv.

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wafers, and afterwards by the Lord Mayor with ipocrasse and spices from a gold cup, which he took as his fee, the ceremonial concluded with a grand flourish of trumpets, and Elizabeth departed "with God's blessing," says the historian, "and to the rejoicing of many a true Englishman's heart."

CHAPTER XV.

Death of Bourchier—Sketch of his Life—Proposals for Foreign Alliances—State of Society in Scotland—Unnatural Conduct of Prince James—Death of the King—Penitence of his Son—Danger of the Duke of Bretagne—Coldness of Henry—Policy of Charles VIII.—Ardour of the English for War—Death of Northumberland—Expedition from the Isle of Wight—Rout of the Bretons—Death of the Duke of Bretagne—Henry's Involvements with Charles VIII.—Slender Aid afforded to Bretagne—Siege of Dixmude—Valour of the English—their terrible Vengeance—Anecdote of an Archer—Rage of the Lord Des Cordes—Truce between France and Bretagne—Ann solicits the Aid of Maximilian—their Betrothment—Perfidy of D'Albret—Project of Charles VIII.—Rough Method of Wooing—Marriage of the French King—Rage and Despair of Maximilian—Henry's secret Determination—Negociation between France and England—Extract from the Will of the Widow of Edward IV.—Preparations for War—Henry's Rapacity—Renewal of the Benevolence—Acts of Parliament—Expedition from England—Siege of Boulogne—Negociations for Peace—Offers of Charles—their Acceptance—Representation of the King's Friends—Disaffection of Maximilian's Subjects—Seizure of Bruges—Reduction of Sluys—Fall of Arras—Recovery of Saint Omer.

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CARDINAL BOURCHIER, Archbishop of Canterbury, died in this year. This venerable ecclesiastic had enjoyed the prelacy fifty-two years from the time of his consecration; and had governed the church in England as its primate during thirty-two: he was

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descended from an illustrious family, and was esteemed a man of considerable learning and a patron of literature. Upon the authority of Wood we are told, that though Caxton usually engrosses the whole merit of having introduced the art of printing into England, the learned world are indebted for its first establishment to the archbishop's exertions. Our author states, *"That the Archbishop of Canterbury being informed that the inventor Tossan, alias John Guthenberg, had set up a press at Harlem, was extremely desirous that the English should be made masters of so beneficial an art. To this purpose he persuaded King Henry VI. to dispatch one Robert Turnour, belonging to the wardrobe, privately to Harlem. This man, furnished with a thousand marks, of which the archbishop supplied three hundred, embarked for Holland; and to disguise the matter, went in company with one Caxton, a merchant of London, pretending himself to be of the same profession. Thus concealing his name and his business, he went first to Amsterdam, then to Leyden, and at last settled at Harlem; where having spent a great deal of time and money, he sent to the king for a fresh supply, giving his highness to understand that he had almost compassed the enterprise. In short, he persuaded Frederick Corselli, one of the compositors, to carry off a set of letters, and embark with him in the night for London. When they arrived, the archbishop, thinking Oxford a more convenient place for printing than London, sent Corselli down thither; and, lest he should slip away before he had discovered the whole secret, a

* Wood's Antiquities of Oxford.

guard was set upon the press: and thus the mystery of printing appeared ten years sooner in the university of Oxford than at any other place in Europe, Harlem and Mentz excepted. Not long after there were presses set up at Westminster, St. Albans, Worcester, and other monasteries of note."

The account of the archbishop's long career, given by his biographers, is singularly meagre; he appears to have been a pious, well-meaning man, though ill qualified to fulfil all the duties of his important station during the convulsed period which saw him placed at the head of the spiritual lords. The great error of the cardinal's life must always be remembered to his disadvantage; the share which he had in the surrender of the young Duke of York to his murderous uncle. Duped by Richard's sophistry, or basely subservient to the protector's schemes, Bourchier answered for the safety of the unhappy infant so remorselessly torn from its mother's arms; and if he had been deceived by an assurance that no harm was intended to the child, he abandoned him to his fate, when resentment for the king's breach of promise might have endangered his own credit and favour at court.

The cardinal witnessed the commencement of that jealous flame which afterwards burned so fiercely between the rival roses, marked its devastating progress, as unquenched by the best blood of Yorkists and Lancastrians it ravaged the devoted land; he saw successive princes of either party rise and fall, and at length when verging upon the brink of the grave, was called upon to perform the holy rite which united the two surviving branches of these

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deadly foes. Cardinal Bourchier officiated at the marriage of Henry VII. and Elizabeth of York: upon narrating the circumstances in the archbishop's life, Fuller quaintly observes, "His hand first held that sweet posie, wherein the white and red roses were tied together." Upon the death of this prelate Henry raised Morton to the vacant see.

The king upon his first accession to the throne had directed his attention towards Scotland; the truce between the two kingdoms was renewed by mutual consent, and freed from the dangers attending Lincoln's rebellion, he pursued the same line of policy adopted by Edward IV. and Richard III, and sought to connect the two royal families by marriage. James, contrary to the general feeling of his countrymen, had always manifested a strong partiality for the English; and Henry anxious to cultivate the Scottish monarch's friendship, dispatched an embassy in the course of the summer to the neighbouring court. The English plenipotentiaries were graciously received, and James appointed the Bishop of Aberdeen and John Lord Bothwell to negociate a treaty of peace. The King of Scotland had lost his consort, a princess of Denmark, and Henry proposed that a matrimonial alliance should take place between him and Elizabeth, widow of Edward IV.;* a circumstance which only one modern writer has adduced as a refutation of the story of the queen's imprisonment and disgrace; but though unaccountably overlooked, or purposely disregarded by other historians, every candid mind, on perusing this important fact, will view the represen-

* Rymer.

tations of Henry's enemies with distrust. Had the king dreaded his mother-in-law's enmity, and incurred her resentment by injurious treatment, he would not have desired to exalt her to the throne of Scotland, where her influence, if exerted against him, would defeat his most anxious wishes; and if, as the ingenious author of the "Historic Doubts" and other subtle disputants have imagined, Henry knew or even suspected that she was acquainted with the preservation of one of her sons, it is still more unlikely that he should wish to invest her with the dangerous power which this splendid alliance would bestow. Two other marriages were also proposed between James Marquis of Ormond, second son of the king, and James Prince of Scotland, with two of the daughters of Edward IV., connections which could only be desirable to Henry from the expectation of their being the best means of cementing a secure and permanent peace between the two countries, and which he never would have contemplated had he feared a rival in the person of a brother of these princesses, who would naturally fly to them for support and assistance. CHAP. XV.

The projected alliances were prevented from taking place by the untimely death of King James, who fell in the prime of life a melancholy sacrifice to the hostility of barbarous nobles. The Earl of Angus, who throughout the whole of his turbulent career had been continually engaged in treasonable practices against his sovereign, disliked the prospect of the king's marriage with the dowager Queen of England, fearing that Elizabeth, if acquainted with his secret negociations with her late husband, Ed-

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ward IV. would expose his treachery. In this emergence he plunged again into rebellion. The lawless state of society in Scotland called loudly for reform, and the king had been petitioned to enforce the penalty of the law upon desperate and notorious offenders, who endangered the peace of the realm, "throw tresoun, slaughter, reif, birning, theft and oppin heirchip, throw default of scharpe execution of justice, and over common granting of grace and remissionis to trespassouris." James complied with the request of the parliament, and endeavoured to bring the perpetrators of these flagrant crimes to justice. Angus and his partizans instantly raised an outcry against proceedings which had been universally recommended as just and necessary; they accused the king of tyranny and oppression, and James having raised an old friend to the ranks of the peerage, absurdly charged him with a design to destroy the ancient nobility.

The representations of Angus and his associates inflamed the minds of the lower orders, and many persons of rank also influenced by these and similar calumnies, joined in the conspiracy: the wild banditti of the border adverse to all law, and whole clans who had incurred its terrors by their treason and bloodshed, eagerly assisted in subverting the government. Resolutely bent upon the dethronement of James, the active and merciless enemies who meditated his ruin suborned the governor of Stirling castle to betray the heir of Scotland, who had been committed to his charge, into the hands of his parent's mortal foes.* The prince was only

* Buchanan.

fifteen years old, and wrought upon by the promises and menaces of his unprincipled companions, who threatened to place the kingdom under the yoke of England if he refused to accede to their wishes, he basely consented to take up arms against his father. The unhappy monarch overwhelmed with grief at this fatal intelligence, roused himself at length to meet a calamity so unexpected and so frightful; numerous friends crowded to his aid, and he renewed the struggle with a fair prospect of ultimate success; but after a considerable period spent in negociations, which were frustrated by the distrust of the contending parties, an act of imprudence precipitated his fall. James left the castle of Edinburgh where he might have remained in security until the mediators who offered their services in putting an end to this unnatural war had effected a pacification, and marched to Stirling. The castle shut its gates, and during a parley with the governor, intelligence arrived that the rebel prince was leading up an army to assault the town. James instantly resolved to hazard a battle, and in an evil moment advanced to meet the enemy.

The royalists, though fighting with bravery, were overpowered by the superior strength of their more warlike antagonists, the fierce inhabitants of the borders. James perceiving that all was lost, fled hastily from the field, and riding down a steep hill in the village of Bannockburn,* was thrown from his horse at the door of a mill, where he was obliged to take shelter in consequence of the injuries sustained in the fall. The king imprudently betrayed his

* Buchanan.

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rank: the pursuers following close upon his retreat, discovered their wretched monarch in his obscure asylum, and dispatched him with their swords upon the spot.

Haunted with late remorse, the parricidal son strove to efface his guilt by prayer and penance, but the iron chain and the frequent pilgrimage could not assuage the horrors of a troubled conscience; the remembrance of his early crime clung to the monarch amid the pomp and splendour of a court which far exceeded those of his predecessors in magnificence, and perishing in the flower of his age in the most dismal battle which Scotland ever deplored, he received in this world the punishment due to so heinous an offence.

The miserable catastrophe which terminated the stormy reign of James III. disappointed Henry's most anxious wish, and delayed the fulfilment of a matrimonial alliance between the two families, which was eventually destined to unite both kingdoms under one sovereign. A peace was however established, though not upon the basis originally proposed; and a flattering but delusive hope of undisturbed amity smiled on the English monarch's unceasing exertions.

Henry was now considerably embarrassed by the state of affairs upon the continent. Bretagne, the last great fief which had withstood the fraud and force of its powerful neighbour, had long been marked as the spoil of France, and the enmity of the respective sovereigns encouraged the offenders of both to seek an asylum in these mutually hostile courts. The Duke of Orleans irritated by his ex-

clusion from the guardianship of Charles VIII. withdrew in anger to the Duke of Bretagne, and at the same time several noblemen were compelled to fly from the just displeasure of Duke Francis, enraged at the murder of his favourite minister, Peter Landois, by an imperious faction, who had for a considerable period meditated the ruin of their upstart rival. The administration of France affected to espouse the cause of the fugitives, and under the pretext of obliging Francis to receive them into favour, declared war, and prepared to invade this coveted province. Francis, threatened with the loss of his inheritance, implored aid from England, and Charles VIII. also reminding Henry of his obligations urged him to remain passive. A more generous spirit would have flown to the assistance of the weakest party, but Henry had learned during his residence in foreign courts to regard his own interests alone, and almost equally indebted to both the contending parties, he could not assist one without being guilty of ingratitude towards the other. Policy would have suggested the danger of permitting France to aggrandize itself at the expence of its neighbours, but former sovereigns had been guilty of the same error in overlooking this important consideration. Still the pitiable situation of the Duke of Bretagne must have warmed and expanded a less frigid heart; weak in constitution and in intellect, the last hours of a life spent in almost hopeless exertions against the designs of an insidious and potent enemy, were embittered by the gloomy prospect which closed around him. Francis had no son, and the only hope of retaining the duchy in his family rested upon the

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marriage of his eldest daughter with some powerful prince. Three suitors contended for the hand of the rich heiress! Maximilian king of the Romans, the Lord d'Albret, who inherited large possessions at the foot of the Pyrenees, and the Duke of Orleans, to whom it is said, although he was already married to Jane of France, sister of Charles VIII., the young lady secretly inclined.*

Henry, averse to a continental war, offered himself as a mediator between France and Bretagne, and dispatched Ursewick, his almoner, on frequent and fruitless journeys to the two courts. Charles VIII. did not decline the proposed negociation, but whilst he amused his enemy by affecting to listen to overtures of peace carried on a vigorous and successful
1488. war; he passed the frontier of Bretagne in May, the towns of Ploermel and Vannes yielded to his arms, and in July he besieged the duke in his capital. Maximilian, engaged in continual hostility with his factious subjects the Flemings, could afford little assistance to his ally, but in this pressing danger he sent fifteen hundred soldiers into Bretagne. The duke's troops thus reinforced, hastened to the defence of the beleaguered city, and cutting their way through the French army, compelled Charles to retire from the walls. Henry hoped to keep the French monarch in check by assuming a hostile appearance, and he also determined to profit by the rumour of an intended war to recruit his treasury from the coffers of his subjects. The English nation, filled with the remembrance of former glories, eagerly desired to renew a contest with France, and the generous wish

* Philip de Comines.

to rescue Bretagne from its perilous situation, added to the popularity of the expected measure. The Parliament passed a liberal grant, and recommended the king to succour his old friend in his present danger. Henry, though resolved if he should be compelled to enter into a war to make it pay for itself, levied the tax with eager avidity. The Earl of Northumberland fell a sacrifice to his too ready zeal in enforcing the king's orders; he assumed an imperious tone which the bold spirits of the north fiercely resented; they rose upon the offending nobleman, and having slain him, exalted the standard of revolt under a leader of their own class, whom they styled John a Chambre, but who was quickly superseded by a more distinguished person, Sir John Egremont. Henry dispatched the Earl of Surrey with an adequate force to suppress the insurrection. The insurgents were speedily routed. Sir John Egremont contrived to make his escape to Brussels, the common refuge of sedition, and his ambitious but less fortunate associate was executed at York.

Whilst Henry only made a vain parade of relieving Bretagne, Sir Edward Wydeville, brother of the queen dowager, burning with generous ardour in so honourable a cause, fitted out a small armament of three hundred soldiers at the Isle of Wight, the seat of his government, and sailing to Bretagne evinced his gratitude for the protection formerly afforded by the duke by offering his services in the field. *Upon receiving this welcome aid, the Duke of Orleans and the Prince of Orange determined to hasten to the relief of Fougieres, which was besieged by the

* Philip de Comines.

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French; and in order to deceive the enemy with the belief that Henry had dispatched a respectable force to their assistance, they arrayed seventeen hundred Breton soldiers in the white coats and scarlet crosses worn by the Englishmen.

The allies learning upon their march that Fougieres had capitulated, were compelled to change their plans, and upon fresh deliberations directed their course to St. Albin, which, the garrison being weak, they hoped to take by storm; but they were stayed at Orange, a small village about two leagues distant, by intelligence of the approach of the French army, and upon this news they prepared for battle.

A general engagement took place, and the cavalry of the Bretons giving way, the whole army was put in confusion and totally routed. The English auxiliaries maintained their country's honour with the most invincible bravery, and fighting when all hope of victory was lost were entirely cut to pieces with their heroic commander; not a single individual surviving the carnage of that dreadful day. The French, inflamed with fury against their ancient foes, doomed all who wore the English dress to the sword, and the blood-stained plain was covered with the dead bodies of those ill-starred Bretons who had assumed the distinguished emblem of their slaughtered allies, the fatal scarlet cross. Orleans and the Prince of Orange were taken prisoners, and the Duke of Bretagne, reduced to the lowest extremity by the loss of this important battle, was compelled to sue for peace.

The Isle of Wight, which had sent forth the flower of its chivalry in the gallant Wydeville's disastrous enterprise, presented a dismal scene of lamentation

and mourning; there were few families throughout the whole district who did not weep the loss of some near and dear relative slain upon a foreign shore. Henry, who had falsely depended upon the resources of the Duchy, and the strength of Maximilian's support, was aroused from his apathy by the expectation of the speedy fall of Bretagne. *The dangers which menaced this luckless province assumed a still more gloomy aspect on the demise of Duke Francis, whose death was accelerated by a fall, and of that of his youngest daughter, which followed almost immediately afterwards. Anne, now the sole heiress, unable to defend herself from Charles, who on the strength of some exploded and unintelligible title had laid claim to her inheritance, turned her imploring eyes towards Henry, fondly hoping that one whom she had been accustomed to style her "most honoured lord, cousin and father," would pity and relieve her from the distressing difficulties of her situation. The English nation deeply touched by the melancholy fate of this young and persecuted princess, loudly demanded permission to avenge her cause, and the king though embarrassed by a secret treaty with Charles, by which he had bound himself to strict neutrality, was obliged to feign compliance with the wishes of his subjects, and to assume a warlike attitude. Appearing to take an earnest interest in the injured orphan's welfare, Henry sent embassies to all the great continental courts, and offered Anne an army of six thousand archers for six months, taking care at the same time, although Parliament had acceded to a new grant,

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*Philip de Comines.

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that the expences of their maintenance should be guaranteed by the surrender of two fortresses, and exacting a promise from the princess that she would not marry without his consent.*

1489. Charles, aware that the English soldiers had been directed to act solely on the defensive, suffered the war to languish in Bretagne, and endeavoured to weaken its firmest ally, Maximilian of Austria, by aiding his disaffected subjects in rebellion against him. The French monarch therefore directed the Lord de Cordes, governor of Picardy, to assist at the siege of Dixmude.

Henry, unwilling that Maximilian should be utterly depressed, no longer restrained the impetuous valour of English knighthood. The Lords Morley and Dawbeny, at the head of two thousand archers and six thousand Germans, rushed out of Calais, and attacked the French in their camp, carrying terror and desolation into the heart of the enemy's host. The English in this brilliant action surpassed even their former achievements. They had only their arrows to oppose against the heavy artillery of a fortified camp; but they advanced boldly to the trenches, poured in a destructive shower of these deadly shafts, and flinging themselves on the ground, waited until the discharge of the enemy's ordnance enabled them to wing a second flight: and then bursting through the barriers, they marked their red path with dreadful slaughter, achieving a rapid and brilliant triumph. The English refused to give quarter, impelled to this unwonted cruelty by their fierce rage for the death of "that gentill young

* Bacon.

knight the Lord Morley,"* who, probably pointed out to the enemy by the splendour of his attire, was selected as a mark for their cannon. "Beyng on horsebacke in a rich coate, he was slain by a gun."† It is said that eight thousand of the enemy fell in this sanguinary action, a number equal to that of the assailants, while the loss on the part of the English and Germans did not exceed a hundred men.‡

The resolution of these determined soldiers is depicted in the conduct of an archer called John Person of Coventry, desperately wounded, "but not entirely disabled by the loss of a leg by a cannon shot, he continued to discharge his arrows kneeling or sitting on the ground. And when the Frenchmen fledde, he cried to one of his felowes, and saide, 'have thou these six arrows that I have lefte, and folow thou the chace, for I may not.' The which John Person died within a few days after, on whose soulle Gode have mercy."§ All the artillery and rich spoils of the camp fell into the hands of the conquerors. Hall tells us that "this felde was profitable to the Englishmen, for they that went forthe in cloth came home in silke, and they that went out on foote came home on great horsses; suche is the chaunce of victory." Severely mortified by the late defeat, the Lord Cordes advanced from Ipre to lay siege to the town of Newport, whither the triumphant party had deposited their plunder. Inflamed by the desire of revenge, this exasperated nobleman made so furious an assault that the outworks gave way, and taking possession of the principal fort and tower, the French

* Leland. † Hall. ‡ Bacon. § Leland's Collection, vol. iv.

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banner waved proudly from the wall!* The opportune arrival of a reinforcement of archers from England in the haven checked the besiegers' progress; they were beaten back with considerable loss, "whereupon," says Bacon, "the Lord Cordes discouraged, and measuring the new succours (which were small) by the successe (which was great)" abandoned the attempt. These actions renewed all the ancient hostility between the French and the English. Goaded by his recent discomfiture, and hopeless of wiping out the disgrace by force of arms, Des Cordes displayed the inveterate nature of his malice by declaring "that he could be content to lie in hell seven years, so he might win Calice from the English." "Vain words," says Bacon, "which did but make the evil blood rankle the more fiercely."

The English army left Bretagne at the end of the stipulated period of their service (six months); their presence though productive of no other advantage, had secured Anne from an invasion: and during this important delay, Charles was compelled to allow his persevering enmity to relax, being threatened on the side of Fontarabia by Ferdinand, King of Castille, and obliged to devote his attention to the Low Countries by the success which had crowned the exertions of Maximilian's brave allies. Thus prevented from concentrating his force upon Bretagne, Charles listened to negociations for peace: he agreed to relinquish all the possessions which he had acquired since the death of Francis, and also promised, that if, on the departure of the English troops, the princess would give security for her allegiance, to permit

* Bacon.

his former conquests, the towns of St. Malo, Fougieres, Dinant, and St. Aubin, to be sequestered, and committed to the guardianship of some indifferent person, until either of the contending claims upon the duchy should be finally established. Anne endeavoured to employ this interval of tranquillity in strengthening herself against new assaults. If the heiress of Bretagne had ever entertained an affection for the Duke of Orleans, it was now utterly hopeless, and the idea of an alliance with him was therefore entirely abandoned. To a marriage with the Count d'Albret she was still unalterably adverse, and gratitude for the assistance afforded to her father in his utmost need induced the almost despairing princess to comply with the offer of Maximilian's hand, a treaty which had been formerly made and was again renewed. The King of the Romans, like the knights of romance, had been twice urged to the rescue of beauty in distress; but though equally ready to take the field in the defence of injured and helpless innocence, he wanted the conduct or the fortune of the renowned Paladins of old. Though flying to the aid of Mary of Burgundy, he was unable to wrest the whole of her splendid inheritance from the grasp of Louis XI., or to reduce her unruly subjects to submission; and now ardently desiring to preserve Bretagne from the sword of Charles, he was still more unhappy in the failure of his attempt. CHAP. XV.

The troubles which continued to distract the Low Countries demanded the monarch's presence, and Maximilian's journey either by sea or by land from Flanders to Bretagne was environed by a thousand

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perils from the active vigilance of his enemies; and deterred by these considerations from hastening himself to the court of Anne, to fight in person the battles of his affianced bride, he permitted the marriage to be performed by proxy.* The Prince of Orange was selected for the representative of the royal bridegroom, and in the presence of the chief nobility of Bretagne, solemnly espoused the princess; adding new ceremonials to the rite for the purpose of rendering it more sacred and inviolable. The marriage being thus celebrated, Maximilian, falsely trusting that the French monarch, dismayed by the splendour of Anne's alliance, would desist from his ambitious pursuit, neglected to provide for the security of the duchy, and busied himself with his affairs in Flanders.

1491. April.

Charles VIII., not easily diverted from his purpose, improved the advantage afforded by the bridegroom's absence. Had the King of the Romans depended more upon his sword than upon the terror of his name, he might have ratified his union with the heiress of Bretagne, and added that fair province to the imperial dominions: but presumptuously imagining that no farther exertions were requisite, he left the unfortunate princess to struggle singly with a power determined upon the subjugation of her inheritance.

Neglected by pretended friends and persecuted by open enemies, Anne sustained a new calamity in the ungenerous revenge of the Count d'Albret. Enraged at the disappointment of his long cherished hopes, by the preference accorded to Maximilian,

* Bacon.

he traitorously delivered up the city of Nantes, which in the full confidence of friendship had been entrusted to his care, to the French monarch. Hostilities were instantly recommenced, and Charles closely following up his advantage poured reinforcements into the invading army, and backed by this powerful force, ventured to disclose a design which he had hitherto cautiously concealed.

Charles VIII. when an infant had been contracted to the Princess Elizabeth of England; but Louis, who had held out this splendid hope to obtain peace from an invading monarch, did not hesitate to break his engagements when a more desirable alliance offered; and negociated a new treaty of marriage between the Dauphin and Margaret of Burgundy. That princess had been sent at an early age into France to be educated in a manner befitting its future queen; but if the marriage had been intended to cement the friendship of the contracting powers, its object had entirely failed: the father and the son-in-law were perpetually at variance, espousing contrary interests, and meditating continual aggressions against each other, and the French monarch crowned repeated wrongs by an insult which overwhelmed Maximilian with indignation and surprise.

Charles, as little scrupulous as his predecessor had been, refused to fulfil the conditions of the treaty between Louis XI. and the court of Burgundy: unfettered by his own betrothment to Margaret, and undeterred by the pompous ceremonial which had lately affianced the heiress of Bretagne to the king

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of the Romans, he offered himself as a suitor to the distressed princess.

Anne, viewing the French monarch as her most deadly foe, and clinging fondly to the hope that her plighted husband would fly to her succour, ere she could be compelled to enter into an alliance abhorrent to every feeling of her heart, rejected the proposal with disdain: but Charles was not to be repulsed, he had won over the members of her council with weighty bribes, and advancing to Rennes, threatened to besiege the city.

Surrounded by interested councillors, who were entirely influenced by French promises and French gold, menaced with captivity by an irresistible force, Anne, cruelly ensnared in the toils of her insidious enemy, saw no hope of escape. All expectations of timely aid from England or Germany were crushed by the celerity of Charles, whose spirited and rapid movements baffled the dilatory measures of his supine opponents. While Henry and Maximilian deliberated, the French monarch acted; and the helpless female abandoned to a despot's mercy, was compelled to accept the terms offered by her rude wooer, and terrified by the approach of hostile lances, consented to become the bride of Charles. *Anne's scruples respecting her marriage with the king of the Romans were removed by an assurance from the clergy that it was not binding, and her new nuptials being solemnized at Langay in Touraine, she was crowned in the cathedral church of St. Denis. The rights and privileges of the Bretons were confirmed to them by a treaty: and they with some difficulty were induced to consent to the annexation of the

* Bacon.

province to France, in the event of Anne's death without heirs. CHAP. XV.

The English cabinet astonished by the sudden termination of the war between France and Bretagne, perceived that it had finessed too deeply; but Henry's imperturbable spirit was not easily discomposed, and as it was too late to prevent the evil, he deliberated upon the means of rendering it subservient to his own advantage. The blow fell with unmitigated weight upon Maximilian: thunderstruck by intelligence which plunged him into the deepest humiliation, when recovered from the stupor of his astonishment he breathed nothing but revenge. The marriage of Charles with Anne inflicted a double wound, the promised crown of France was snatched from the brows of his daughter, and the enraged prince deprived of his own bride and her fair domains, suffered also the bitter accusations of self-reproach, in the keen reflection that he might have averted the catastrophe by a more vigorous effort in favour of his betrothed wife. Proclaiming his crying wrongs with futile vehemence to the princes of the German empire, Maximilian called upon his friends to aid him in resenting the insults which he had received from France: prodigal in promises they were lukewarm in the cause; and compelled to waste his anger in vain imprecations and empty menaces, he abandoned at length his fruitless hope of vengeance, and submitted to make peace.

Henry had amused the nation with almost endless negociations with France, which were often broken off, to be as often renewed; both monarchs had de-

* Bacon.

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termined to avoid a war, but this state secret was not suffered to transpire, and the English still tenaciously adhered to the hope of an open breach, which the disputes relative to Bretagne seemed to render an inevitable necessity.

Charles dispatched frequent embassies from Paris to the English court; a splendid deputation arrived in November 1489, and in recording the introduction of the French envoys to Queen Elizabeth at Westminster, a journalist of the time informs us, that "ther was with her moder, Queen Elizabeth, and my lady the kinge's moder;" * an important fact, as it relates to the situation of the dowager queen, who is represented in some of the old chronicles to have been at this period in miserable captivity by Henry's orders in the abbey of Bermondsey.

The death of the dowager queen occurred soon after the arrival of the embassy; she is never mentioned again in the annals of the reign, but the precise time of her decease is not known, her will bears the date of 1492, and it is probable that she did not long survive its execution. It is short, and contains touching expressions of regret at her utter inability to prove her affection to her children by any thing save words. "Whereas I have no worldly goods to do the queene's grace, my dearest daughter, a pleasure with, neither to reward any of my children according to my heart and mind, I beseech Almighty God to bless her grace, with all her noble issue; and with as good a heart and mind as is to me possible, I give her grace my blessing, and all my aforesaid children. Item, I will that such small

* Leland's Collection.

stuff and goods that I have, be disposed truly in the contentation of my debts, and for the health of my soul, as far as they will extend. Item, that if any of my blood will any of my said stuff or goods, to me pertaining, I will that they have the preferment before any other."* CHAP. XV.

Henry VII. bears all the odium of having reduced Edward's unfortunate widow to this destitute condition, but she was stripped of all her possessions by Richard III., and the monarch must only be censured for not having restored them. Had he overcome the natural avariciousness of his disposition in favour of one who certainly had not proved herself friendly to him, it would, perhaps, have been only an act of justice; but at this distant period it is impossible to say that Henry's conduct respecting his wife's mother was wholly inexcusable. A few bare facts alone have reached us; we know not the cause given for enmity, the extent of mischief intended or inflicted by a person who seems without these qualifying circumstances to have been treated with an undue degree of severity, at least as far as regards the non-restitution of her property; in other respects there is no certain evidence that she sustained injurious treatment from the king.

Aware that the French monarch entertained romantic visions of the subjection of Italy, and was therefore anxious to secure harmony at home, that he might depart without fear, on his foreign expedition, Henry assumed a warlike attitude in order to enhance the price of his consent to a treaty of peace, declaring before the assembled parliament that he

* Testamenta Vetusta, vol. i.

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would lead an army in person, to humble the pride of a monarch who "troubled the christian world."* But Henry though perhaps in some degree compelled by the prejudices of the times to appear to sanction the fond desire of his subjects for foreign conquests, was too wise not to perceive that the project of subduing France was equally chimerical and impolitic. At unity with itself, and having gained vast acquisitions of strength and power since the days of Edward III. and Henry V., its princes were also more expert in the art of war, and had already shewn by their conduct in Bretagne, that conscious of the errors of their forefathers in staking the weal of the realm upon a battle, they would harass and exhaust their enemies by long blockades, and force them to return ingloriously home, baffled and impoverished by their fruitless exertions.† Henry carefully concealed these sentiments from all save the two ecclesiastics of his council, Morton and Fox,‡ in whom he placed unlimited confidence. Avarice, the vice of the monarch's nature, likewise prompted him to dissemble: all the other evil qualities which dimmed his character may be traced to the difficulties and temptations with which he was beset, but this was the master passion, and it betrayed itself in every action of his life. The king, not content with the former contribution which had been carefully treasured up in his own coffers, instead of being appropriated to the purpose for which it had been designed, levied taxes with as much eagerness as if he really had intended to support a long and expensive war. Henry likewise procured the con-

* Bacon. † Bacon. ‡ Bacon.

sent of parliament in the revival of the benevolence, a measure which had endangered the popularity of Edward IV. and wholly destroyed that of his successor; it was however too lucrative to be abandoned, and Bacon tells us that it raised "exceeding great summes, insomuch as the City of London, in those dayes contributed nine thousand pounds and better. There is a tradition of a dilemma, that Bishop Morton the chancellor used, to raise up the benevolence to higher rates; and some called it his 'forke' and some his 'crutch.' For he had couched an article in the instructions to the commissioners who were to levy the benevolence, that if they met with any that were sparing, they should tell them 'that they must needs have, because they laid up; and if they were spenders, they must needs have, because it was seene in their port and manner of living.' So neither kinde came amisse."

After Christmas the Parliament met again, and manifesting the same warlike spirit which had characterized its last sitting, several acts were passed for the regulation of the army. The senate endeavoured to prevent the recurrence of those serious grievances which had arisen from the long arrears of soldiers' wages, by commanding each captain, on pain of imprisonment, to pay his followers within six days after the money should be issued from the treasury. The Parliament also framed a law for the punishment of desertion, and increased the facilities of raising money by gentlemen desirous of accompanying the king to the field, by enabling them to sell and mortgage their lands without the usual fines for alienations. But while these active preparations were going forward, Henry still found

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excuses for protracting his enterprise; he represented the danger of leaving England until a solid peace should be established with its northern neighbour: and four months were wasted in negociations with Scotland. When this point was settled, another delay of two months took place, which were consumed in making fresh regulations, and it was not until the sixth of October 1492 that Henry led his troops to embarkation. The choice of such an unfavourable season of the year for a foreign expedition raised strong doubts of the king's sincerity; and many persons prophecied that the campaign would not be of long continuance. Henry silenced these rumours by declaring "that he, intending not to make a summer business of it but a resolute warre, without term prefixed, until he recovered France, it skilled not much when he began it; especially having Calais at his back, where he might winter, if the reasons of the warre required it."*

The English armament sailed from the port of Sandwich a gallant and effective array, consisting of five and twenty thousand infantry, and sixteen hundred men at arms; a fortnight after their arrival at Calais Henry invested Boulogne; but not a single memorable action occurred at this siege, and from the inertness of the French, who made no preparations to repel the invasion, it is more than probable that Charles had already settled the conditions of peace; and the English monarch began early to prepare the minds of his captains for a cessation of hostilities, by promulgating the news of Maximilian's defection from his engagements. The king of the

* Bacon.

Romans although anxious for war was entirely destitute of the means required for its support, and intelligence being soon after received that the Spanish allies, Ferdinand and Isabella, had concluded a separate peace with Charles, the English soldiers saw their hopes melt away, and with the prospect of spending an inactive winter, were obliged to relinquish those brilliant expectations which they had formed of glorious victories, in a country so fruitful in wealth and honour to the followers of the heroes of Crecy and of Azincourt.

Henry, still endeavouring to dissemble, caused a rough draft of a treaty of peace, which had been previously negociated between Lord Dawbeny commander of Calais and the French government, to be laid before a council of war, which consisted of twenty-four of the principal officers, his immediate friends, who, aware of the monarch's wishes, and influenced by the unsparing bribes which Charles had proffered, advised their master to accede to the terms proposed; pleading the lateness of the season, the sickness of the army, the strength of Boulogne, and the failure of the allies, as the motives for their earnest desire to procure an honourable termination of the war. Henry suffered himself to be easily persuaded, and like his predecessor Edward consented to sell his forbearance at a high price; he was reimbursed in all the sums which had been lent to the Duke of Bretagne, together with the expences of his present campaign, and the arrears of the annuity due to the late King Edward IV.; and Charles bound himself to pay a yearly pension, or as the English

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chose to style it a tribute, until the whole debt should be liquidated.

The king affected to be entirely influenced in his acceptance of these proposals by the petition of his nobles, who unblushingly declared it to be the most glorious peace that any king of England had ever made with a king of France; and to prove the sincerity of this opinion offered to take all the blame upon themselves, and to defend it against any of their monarch's subjects who should presume to dispute its policy. * The boasts of these hired advocates who had made a profit of their equipments, could not stifle the murmurs of men impoverished by large expenditures in preparations for the field, and who having sold or alienated their estates, saw themselves deprived of the hope of acquiring riches and honour in the plunder which had so liberally rewarded the successful arms of their ancestors. "They," says Bacon, "stuck not to say, that the king cared not to plume his nobility and people to feather himself. And some made themselves merry with that the king had said in Parliament 'that after the war was once begun, he doubted not but to make it pay itselfe;' saying 'hee had kept promise.'"

Henry during this short campaign, and also previous to its commencement, had not been inattentive to the affairs of his unfortunate ally, the king of the Romans. The rebellion of the Flemings had been encouraged and supported by Lord Ravenstein, who revolting from Maximilian had seized the town of Sluys, where, strongly entrenched, and receiving

* Bacon.

through the medium of the French continual supplies from Picardy, he defied all authority; and collecting a great number of ships in the convenient haven attached to the port, commenced a piratical warfare on all the merchant flags which traded through the neighbouring seas. Bruges was also in a state of open insurrection, and Maximilian had often endeavoured to possess himself of Dam, a small town situated between that city and Sluys, but had always failed. This important station was at length secured by stratagem. The Duke of Saxony had visited the Low Countries for the avowed purpose of acting as umpire, and settling the differences between the sovereign and the Flemish malecontents; he saw the advantage to be derived from the occupation of Dam, and he determined to make an attempt upon it; and approaching with the caution of an experienced soldier, he asked the magistrates of Bruges to allow him to take up his residence in the town, with a retinue of men-at-arms fitted to maintain his estate and dignity. Permission being fearlessly granted, the duke sent couriers forward to the several inns to procure lodgings, and preceded by a warlike company, who however maintained the most peaceable demeanour, rode straight through the city; and while the town's-people were amused by the diligent inquiries which the duke's servants still made for quarters, departed through the opposite gate, and pursued the route to Dam, whose inhabitants, unsuspicious of troops who came from Bruges, were ill-prepared for resistance.

The Duke of Saxony having made himself master of a place which had so long baffled Maximilian's

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forces, represented the necessity of reducing Sluys, in order to quell the factious spirit of the Flemings, who were upheld by the example and the impunity of Lord Ravenstein: offering to besiege it on the land side, if the King of England would send a fleet to blockade the haven. Henry also petitioned by the merchants, who complained of the injury sustained by commerce from the hostile barks which infested the narrow seas, dispatched Sir Edward Poynings, a valiant commander, with twelve ships well equipped with troops and artillery. The gallant Englishman invested the maritime part of the town, and by his orders the soldiers issuing from their vessels at ebb tide, assaulted a strong castle, which after a stout resistance of twenty days, was reduced to extreme distress, and the destruction of a bridge of boats, which communicated between the town and the beleaguered fortress, obliged Lord Ravenstein to capitulate. The fall of Sluys not only redounded to the honour of the English arms, but produced infinite advantage to Maximilian. The citizens of Bruges, dismayed by the total defeat of their insolent ally, made overtures for peace to the Duke of Saxony and Sir Edward Poynings, consenting to submit to their sovereign, and to assist in defraying the expenses of the war. *Poynings having lost only fifty soldiers and one gentleman of note, a De Vere, in the late brilliant action, joined Henry at Boulogne; and while the English army were lying before this fortress, Maximilian also recovered Arras and St. Omer from the French. The descriptive page of Philip de Comines furnishes a lively

* Bacon.

account of the successful artifices and intrigues by which these towns were regained, and the temptation to gratify the reader with the narrative, extracted from the knightly historian's entertaining chronicle, is too strong to be resisted. CHAP. XV.

"In the mean time, while De Cordes and Cardonne were at Bulloin treating with the King of England, the citizens of Arras knowing the garrison within the towne to be but weake, practised to yield it into Maximilian's hands, who sent certain bands thither, the which in great diligence approached neere to the towne. When all thinges were in a readiness, and the gates being so negligently guarded, that the traitors with their counterfeited keyes had opened them, they began a song, whereby they willed the enemies to make haste, who presently repaired to the gates, and were received into the towne. Paul Carquelevant, a Breton, governor in the absence of the bastard of Cardonne, at the enemye's first entrie retired himselfe with his soldiers into the castell; but fearing leest it should be taken by assault, he soone abandoned it greatly to his reproach: for if he had held it but till the next day, divers French bands had come thither to his relief. The towne was spoiled, and many slaine; neither were the churches spared, nor the traitors' houses. The author of this treason was a poore smith that dwelled upon the towne wall, and had beene the only man that was suffered to remain in the towne by Lewis the Eleventh, when he transported the townsmen as a colony into France. Carquelevant the governor when the town was surprised, lay fast asleepe, drowned in drinke and good

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cheere, as it is said. The towne was spoiled by the soldiers, because Maximiliani was behinde with them for certaine mouethes paiement. [illegible] of Saint Omer was also taken at the same time, though some referr it to another time; but whensoever it was taken, this is most certaine, that the negligence of the watch was the losse thereof. For the enimies being led by George Dabecsin, made shew at their first comming before the towne as though they would have scaled it, at which time the French soldiers were ready to withstand them upon the walls, being strong and very defensible both by nature and by arte: whereupon the enimies, under pretence of feare, retired into their campe; yea and further, when the French issued foorthe to skirmish with them, they ever retired, faining the like feare, which dissimulation they used for the space of eight daies, and by this their pollicie caused the French to remit much of their accustomed industry and diligence; which when the Burgundians and Almains perceived, they with great expedition reared ladders against the walls and bulwarks of the towne, which they easily entered, the watch being fast asleepe, and in some places no watch at all. Then brake they open the gates, slew the French soldiers and the citizens, and made themselves masters of the town.

"At the same time was Amiens also attempted by the Burgundians in the night, and like to have been surprised by the like negligence of the watch: but Katherine de Lignes (a woman of a manlike courage) awaked the watch out of their dead sleepe, by means whereof the alarme was sounded, and all

the towne arose in arms, and part went to defend the walls, and the rest issued foorth and skirmished, and put to flight Maximilian's bands, who plainly confessed that the diligence and industry of one woman had wrung the victory out of their hands." CHAP. XV.

CHAPTER XVI.

New Scheme of Henry's Enemies—Alleged Escape of the Duke of York—Perkin Warbeck's Reception in Ireland—Policy of Charles VIII.—Favour shewn to the Impostor by Margaret of Burgundy—Disaffection in England—Inquiries concerning Perkin's Birth—Conduct of the Duke of Burgundy—Examination of Tyrrel and Dighton—Arrest of Perkin's Friends—Panic of others—Charge against Sir William Stanley—his Confession—Henry's apparent Clemency—Condemnation and Execution of Stanley—his vast Riches—Supposition concerning Stanley's Fall—Government of Poynings in Ireland—Feud between Poynings and Kildare—Favour extended to Kildare and Desmond—Discontent of the Flemings—Warbeck appears off the Coast of Kent—is compelled to retire—The King visits the Earl of Derby—Sanguinary Execution in Kent—Treaty with Burgundy—Exile of Warbeck—is repulsed in Ireland—his Reception at the Scottish Court—Marriage with Lady Katherine Gordon—he crosses the Border—Imposition of New Taxes—Insurrection in Cornwall—March of the Rebels to Blackheath—Defeat of Audley—Execution of Audley and his Confederates—Decline of Warbeck's Favour in Scotland—he joins the Cornish Rebels—Siege of Exeter—Warbeck's Discomfiture before the Walls—is forced to retreat—flies to Sanctuary—Henry's Courtesy—Henry's Visit to Exeter—Surrender of Warbeck—his Treatment at Westminster—he effects his Escape—is retaken—his Punishment—his Confession—is lodged in the Tower—A new Impostor—Execution of Ralph Wilford—Sentence of the Priest—Attempt of Warbeck in the Tower—Implication of the Earl of Warwick—Warbeck's Trial and Death—Unjust Condemnation of the Earl of Warwick—Death of the last of the Plantagenets—Indignation of the English People—Henry attempts to palliate his Conduct.

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THE English nation, already displeased by the tame surrender of Bretagne to Charles VIII., were

goaded into louder discontent by the return of the army from an inglorious yet costly expedition; and Henry had most unwisely exasperated the people at a moment in which a new competitor for the throne had suddenly emerged from obscurity and assumed the cherished name of Plantagenet.

The opinions of the learned world have been so much divided on the subject of Perkin Warbeck's identity with Richard Duke of York, that to pronounce a decided judgment upon the claims of this mysterious personage would perhaps be deemed too presumptuous; yet however ably tutored, the very circumstance that the true heir of the throne should have been kept in the back ground for so many years, would almost carry conviction to every mind unbiassed by the subtle disquisitions of accomplished casuists.

A young man, apparently about twenty years of age, landing at Cork from a merchant's vessel which had sailed from the port of Lisbon, attracted universal attention by the beauty of his countenance and the superior elegance of his deportment. While all eyes were fixed upon the stranger, a deeper interest was excited in his favour by a whisper which informed the admiring spectators that they beheld Richard Plantagenet, the youngest son of Edward IV., who, providentially saved from death by the relenting clemency of one of the assassins suborned to murder him, had flown for security to a foreign land.

This statement, so far from throwing discredit upon Sir Thomas More's narrative respecting the fate of the young princes, tends to establish its

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truth. If the death of Edward V. had been ascribed to natural causes, and the escape of the Duke of York attributed to a less doubtful medium than the sudden remorse of the ruffian who had slain his brother, Richard III. might have been exonerated from the charge of having made away with his nephews, but such a version of the melancholy history of Edward's children was not attempted at the time. Richard himself evaded, but did not deny the accusation of their murder; and the fact appears to have been too notorious and indisputable for Perkin Warbeck to venture upon so material an alteration in a tale universally believed. The history of the adventurer, from the period of his alleged escape to the continent, was studiously involved in impenetrable mystery. None of the great Yorkist lords had been previously made acquainted with the secret of his existence, and suffered to peril their lives in the cause of a false Warwick many were miserably slain; nor was the conduct of the friends of the pretended Duke of York less unaccountable in permitting Henry to establish himself upon the throne before they proclaimed the rights of the true heir.

The Irish, though eagerly crediting Perkin's marvellous story, were not able to afford him any essential aid. The two great Earls of Kildare and Desmond were deterred from an open espousal of his cause by the failure and disgrace which had attended Lambert Simnel's enterprize; the former hesitated even to acknowledge the new claimant. But while his prospects were thus gloomy in Ireland, he received an invitation from the court of France, and instantly repairing to Charles VIII. was received

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with flattering distinction. The French monarch, threatened with a war by Henry VII., affected to countenance Perkin Warbeck's claims, to whom he assigned a guard of honour. A few fugitives and exiles from England, not exceeding a hundred persons, offered their services to the heir of the house of York, and for a short time the adventurer's hopes were brightened by the sunshine of royal favour.

The views of Charles in supporting a rival to the English monarch were soon apparent. Henry, disturbed by the station which this daring personage had assumed in a powerful court, exhibited an inclination to make peace; and the intention of the French government being answered, the pretended Duke of York was instantly dismissed to seek protection in another country. The wanderer directed his course to Brussels, and was rapturously received by the implacable foe of the house of Lancaster, Margaret of Burgundy. A guard of thirty halberdiers, liveried in "murray and blewe,"* was appointed to attend him; and the duchess, apparently giving implicit credit to his statement, styled him "The White Rose of England."

Margaret's patronage of a young man, who could scarcely have deceived her by the most artful representations, convinced many persons of the reality of the Duke of York's escape. It was a tale calculated to spring from the mystery which enveloped the fate of that unfortunate prince, and too delightful to romantic imaginations to be easily dismissed. Nor was this the only age of imposture; more than one person had assumed the name and character of

* Hall.

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Richard II.; and notwithstanding the difficulties of the undertaking, had been credited and supported. The present enterprise was certainly less hazardous; and though Margaret cannot be supposed to have been so madly enraged against the enemy of her house, as to desire that a mean adventurer should wrest the crown of England from the brows of her own relations, the heirs of Edward IV. by the female line, yet she might have preferred the claims of Edward Plantagenet Earl of Warwick to those of Elizabeth of York, who had consented to share the throne with a Tudor and a Lancastrian; and that she did wish to effect a revolution in favour of the captive prince, is evident from the support which she had previously afforded to Lambert Simnel, the former instrument of a similar attempt.

The *welcome which the pretender to the honours of the House of York had received at Margaret's court excited a strong ferment in the minds of the disaffected and the restless; many persons fled into Flanders, and Henry becoming seriously alarmed employed various agents to inquire into the particulars of his mysterious enemy's former life. † By diligent search throughout the towns and villages of Flanders, the king's spies ascertained the birth and parentage of the adventurer. In their report they stated that he was born at Tournay of respectable parents, his father being a converted Jew, who had held an office in the town, named John Osbeck or Warbeck, and that he was well known in many

* Bacon says, "The news came blazing and thundering over into England."

† Hall. Bacon.

places in Flanders by the name of Perkin Warbeck. We are told by Bernard Andreas, a contemporary historian, that the impostor was also the godson of Edward IV. Bacon, from the character of that licentious prince, and his condescension in becoming gossip in so mean a house, assumes a closer degree of relationship. CHAP. XVI.

The malecontent party in England also anxious to be made acquainted with the pretensions of a person so interesting to every friend of the House of York, dispatched Sir Robert Clifford as their envoy to the court of Brussels; the knight was received by Margaret without distrust, and being introduced to the white rose, learned the history of his adventures from his own lips. Sir Robert either giving, or affecting to giving credit to the tale, assured his English correspondents that Richard Duke of York had in reality escaped the machinations of his uncle. Whether Clifford was a traitor from the commencement does not appear, but having penetrated all the secrets of the party, he betrayed them to Henry for a splendid bribe.

Whilst the court of Burgundy continued to protect a claimant so well instructed to deceive, Henry was aware that his government would be endangered: the Archduke Philip, to whom the king applied for the surrender or dismissal of the alleged impostor, declining to interfere, on the plea "that the duchess dowager was absolute in the lands of her dowry." He therefore sought to distress the Flemings by cutting off their trade, and for this purpose removed the mart for the sale of English cloth from Antwerp to Calais, and strictly forbade all commercial inter-

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course between the two countries. The cautious king also attempted to establish the fact of the murder of the young princes in the Tower. Two only of the persons said to have been employed in this dark transaction were in existence, Sir James Tyrrel, and his meaner colleague Dighton. These persons were apprehended and confessed the deed,* "(as the king gave out)" but Henry in withholding the particulars and publishing the substance only of their declarations, left the matter still in doubt; he was probably afraid that the most material evidence would be unattainable, and dared not institute a strict search after the bodies, a report having arisen of their removal from their burial place under the stairs to some equally obscure part of the Tower, by a priest who was now dead.

The treachery of Sir Robert Clifford had exposed the designs of the opposing faction to the king; aware that Perkin Warbeck entertained little hope of foreign aid, and depended chiefly upon the assistance of the English malecontents, after having by a strict investigation assured himself of the guilt of those persons who had been pointed out as the chief conspirators, he by a vigorous effort crushed the whole design at once, and struck terror into the hearts of his most secret enemies, by suddenly arresting seven gentlemen of rank and fortune, together with several ecclesiastics. The axe, which until this unhappy period had been mercifully withheld, now fell heavily upon the foes of Henry's government. † Sir Thomas Thwaites, Sir Simon Mountford, and Robert Ratcliffe, were led to imme-

* Bacon. † Bacon.

diate execution. John Ratcliffe, Lord Fitzwalter, was sent a prisoner to Calais, with the hope of pardon; but upon an unsuccessful attempt to make his escape suffered the doom which had been passed upon him in England. The lives of the remainder were spared, and appalled by the swift destruction which had followed the first symptom of rebellion, those who were conscious of secret treason, apprehensive of a similar dicovery, fled with guilty haste into sanctuary.* CHAP. XVI.

Henry unsatisfied while one leader of consequence remained to fill the realm with disquiet, aimed a second and more deadly blow at the adventurer's hopes: an extraordinary and unexpected scene took place in the Tower, whither the king removed his court after the celebration of the Christmas festivities at Westminster, as a convenient spot which contained both a palace and a prison within its walls, and whence, without the usual clamour attending the dispatch of warrants, he could arrest and secure the most powerful lord of his court.†

After the residence of a few days the king summoned a select council, and while the members sate in deliberation, Sir Robert Clifford was introduced: throwing himself at the king's feet, the knight humbly solicited the pardon of which he had been previously assured; and being questioned respecting the nature and extent of the conspiracy which he had deserted, impeached Sir William Stanley, the lord chamberlain of the king's household, as an abettor of Perkin Warbeck's treasonable practices. Henry apparently struck with astonishment and dis-

* Hall. † Bacon.

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may by intelligence so strange and unwelcome, warmly repelled the injurious accusation, but Clifford unappalled pressed the charge with redoubled vehemence, offering to justify it at the peril of life and soul.* Henry, still affecting to confide in the innocence of his friend, proceeded with cautious delicacy, requesting merely that he would confine himself to the apartments which had been already allotted for his residence, until the affair should be investigated. The next day the lords of the council were deputed to examine this illustrious prisoner, and perchance convinced that denial would be vain, and depending too securely upon the gratitude of Henry for past services, Stanley confessed enough to sanction his condemnation.

The sense of present injuries subdued the recollection of former benefits, and the chamberlain's riches offered too strong a temptation to be resisted; the avaricious monarch, anxious to clutch in his grasp wealth which he feared would be devoted to the interests of a rival, exacted the full penalty of treason. Sharing the fate of Northumberland, of Warwick, and of Buckingham, Stanley was precipitated to the tomb by the hand to which he had given a regal sceptre. †Henry allowed six weeks to elapse before he publicly decided on the fate of Stanley, thus affording time for the intercession of friends, and appearing to maintain a struggle with himself ere he could consent to the death of one to whom he had been so deeply indebted. But if any solicitations were made in the prisoner's behalf, they availed not; and, arraigned of high treason, he was

* Bacon. † Bacon.

condemned and led to execution. Henry eagerly seized the spoil of "the richest subject in the kingdom, there being found," says Bacon, "in Sir William Stanley's castle of Holt, forty thousand marks in ready money, and plate, besides jewels, houshold stuffe, stockes upon his grounds and other personal estate, exceeding great. And for his revenue in land and fee, it was three thousand pounds a yeare of old rent, a great matter in those times."

The exact amount of Stanley's guilt has never transpired; by some it was averred that a few unguarded words had doomed him to the block: speaking familiarly with Sir Robert Clifford, he said, "That if he were sure that this young man (Perkin Warbeck) were King Edward's son, he would never bear arms against him." Three learned judges who were members of the privy council being consulted upon this nice question, declared "that it was a dangerous thing to admit ifs and ands to qualify treason, whereby every man might express his malice, and escape its punishment;" and upon this decision the heedless speaker was condemned. Bacon is however of opinion, that the king's enmity to Sir William Stanley had been long smothered, and only waited for a favourable opportunity to burst forth in his destruction; and he thus traces the causes of disgust which arose between Henry and this once cherished friend.

"Now for the motive of his falling off from the king; it is true that at Bosworth field the king was beset, and in a manner enclosed round about by the troupes of King Richard, and in manifest danger of

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his life; when this Stanley was sent by his brother with three thousand men to his rescue, which he performed so that King Richard was slain upon the place. For which service the king gave him great gifts, made him his counsellor and chamberlain; and (somewhat contrary to his nature) had winked at the great spoiles of Bosworth field, which came almost wholly to this man's hands to his infinite enriching. Yet nevertheless blown up with the conceit of his merit, he did not think he had received good measure from the king, at least not pressing down and running over, as he expected. And his ambition was so exorbitant, and unbounded, as he became sutour to the king for the earldom of Chester, which ever being a kind of appanage to the principality of Wales, and using to goe to the king's sonne, his suit did not only end in a denial, but in a distaste. The king perceiving thereby that his desires were intemperate, and his cogitations vaste and irregular, and that his former benefits were but cheap, and lightly regarded by him; wherefore the king began not to brook him well. And as a little leaven of new distate doth commonly sowre the whole lump of former merits, the king's wit began now to suggest unto his passion, that Stanley at Bosworth field, *though he came time enough to save his life, yet he stayed long enough to endanger it.* But yet having no matter against him, he continued him in his places until this his fall."

Henry paralyzed the spirit of rebellion by this act of timely but merciless rigour: none could hope for pardon since Stanley had not been spared; and disheartened by the loss which the party had sus-

tained in so potent a friend, the conspiracy fell to pieces: but sedition, though restrained by fear from open hostility, manifested itself in secret murmurs, libels against the monarch and his government were industriously circulated. Henry resorted to farther acts of severity to quell this new evil, and five persons suffered death for distributing the offensive calumnies. CHAP. XVI.

The king had now leisure to attend to the affairs in Ireland, he appointed his second son Henry Duke of York, to the government, but this prince being only four years old, Sir Edward Poynings was entrusted with the command. Sailing to Ireland at the head of a thousand soldiers, this distinguished captain endeavoured to reduce the turbulent natives to obedience, but with little success; his military talents were unavailing in a wild country surrounded with bogs and fastnesses, which afforded inaccessible retreats to the insurgents, who issuing forth from their hiding places surprised and cut to pieces the troops which were sent against them. The Earl of Kildare had been directed to act under Sir Edward Poynings' orders, but a feud soon broke out between these haughty spirits, and the knight suspecting that the rebellious clans were secretly encouraged by this insolent chieftain, displayed the full extent of his authority, and causing the earl to be arrested, sent him a prisoner to England. Discouraged in his warlike attempts, the new governor wisely turned his attention to the internal policy of the country. During his administration several beneficial acts were passed in Parliament which received the name of Poynings' law; but while he was thus honourably

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employed in promoting the welfare of the country, he suffered personal feelings to urge him to a revengeful and impolitic measure. By his influence a bill of attainder was passed by the Irish Parliament against the Earl of Kildare, which extended also to the family and the adherents of this powerful nobleman. Henry, who was anxious to conciliate his Irish subjects, disapproved of this unadvised ebullition of resentment, and having reversed the act, received Kildare into favour. The earl was subsequently reinstated in the government of Ireland. The offences of the Earl of Desmond were likewise overlooked upon his taking the oath of allegiance, and peace was restored to the country by the offer of a free pardon to all the malecontents with the exception of Lord Barry, and O'Water, a citizen of Cork, who had become one of the most active of Perkin Warbeck's partisans.

The effects of Henry's vigorous policy were now severely felt by the "White Rose of England." The Flemings deprived of the advantages which had formerly accrued from their profitable traffic, began to murmur at the injury which they sustained by the support afforded by Margaret to an enemy to the English government. The Archduke Philip also displeased at the defalcation in his revenues, occasioned by the failure of the duties on the customs, remonstrated with the Duchess of Burgundy on the subject of the grievance which she had entailed upon the country; and the pretended Duke of York, who during his long sojourn at Brussels had neglected to bring forward any legal proof of his claim to the title which he had adopted, mustered a few followers

whose fortunes were as desperate as his own, and sailed from a realm which no longer promised to protect him, scarcely knowing whither to direct his course. Approaching the coast of Kent, the adventurer attempted to set up his standard, but the inhabitants were adverse; doubtful of the reality of his claims, dreading the displeasure of the king, and perceiving that he was only attended by a few foreigners of no reputation, they attacked the invaders, and after a sharp skirmish drove them to their boats with the loss of many killed and a hundred and sixty-nine prisoners: dismayed by this unexpected repulse Warbeck again sought an asylum in Flanders.* CHAP. XVI.

Henry, at the solicitation of his mother, who was anxious to make it appear to the world that her husband the Earl of Derby still enjoyed the king's undiminished affection, was visiting at the house of his father-in-law during a royal progress at the time that intelligence reached him of the pretender's arrival. Upon the first news he resolved to return instantly to the capital, but on learning the total discomfiture and flight of the invaders, he dispatched Sir Richard Guilford into Kent, and without mercy or remorse commanded the execution of all the prisoners. Many suffered in London and the rest were gibbeted along the coast to warn their companions of the fate which awaited them should they renew the rash attempt.

Early in the following year, Warbeck was compelled to leave Flanders in consequence of friendly overtures which took place between Henry and the 1496.

* Fabian. Hall. Stow. † Bacon.

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archduke, a treaty of commerce was signed by both potentates, and the latter being expressly bound to prevent the duchess dowager from harbouring the enemies of the king of England in her dominions, the outcast youth recommenced a life of uncertain wandering. Somewhat encouraged by the warmth of his former reception, Warbeck determined to revisit Ireland; but he no longer experienced the affection of the natives: reconciled to Henry's government, they refused to embark in a new rebellion, and turning from the inhospitable shore, he sought to interest the feelings of the Scottish monarch in his favour. James IV. was not averse to a war with England, and Warbeck's hopes were unexpectedly raised by the flattering welcome which the monarch accorded: he had been furnished, it is said, with recommendatory letters from Charles VIII. and the Duchess of Burgundy, and giving a pathetic, though if we may credit the authority of Bacon, a very ambiguous account of his misfortunes, received warm promises of protection and support. James, either deceived by the representations of his guest, or appearing to give them credit for some purpose of state, entered eagerly into the pretender's views, not even scrupling to bestow upon him in marriage the hand of the beautiful Lady Katherine Gordon, a daughter of the Earl of Huntley and a near kinswoman of the royal house.

Henry observed this rapid change in the adventurer's fortune with quick-sighted alarm. He endeavoured to detach James from the interests of his enemy, but the negociation failed; and Perkin Warbeck, proclaiming himself to be the true Duke

of York, crossed the border, accompanied by a Scottish army, which the monarch commanded in person, and fourteen hundred followers who had enlisted under his banners in Flanders. The northern people remained firm in their allegiance, and treating Warbeck's manifesto with contempt, refused to acknowledge the White Rose. This frigid coldness convinced James of the inutility of his enterprise, and contenting himself with pillaging the adjacent country, returned without performing any action of importance. * Perkin Warbeck's demeanour is reported to have been consonant to the loftiness of his pretensions: apparently touched by the miseries which war inflicted, he besought the King of Scotland to spare the lives and property of his subjects. James, who perceived that the feeling of the English was totally adverse to the adventurer's hopes, advised him to be less careful of the interests of his enemy, and carried on the work of devastation.

Henry, ever insatiate of gold, employed the Scottish war as a pretext to wring a fresh subsidy from the nation; and although his treasury was filled with vast sums, acquired for the purpose of carrying on hostilities with France, an obsequious parliament granted a new tax. The people of Cornwall, little interested in transactions which took place in a part of the kingdom so remote from their own district, resisted the impost; and listening with avidity to the inflammatory orations of a lawyer, who urged them to take up arms in defence of their rights, the deluded multitude broke out into rebellion. A

* Bacon. Hall.

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farrier, named Joseph, put himself at their head, and marching through Devonshire to Wells, were joined by Lord Audley, a turbulent nobleman, and, in the phrase of Bacon, "aspiring to ruin."

The insurgents, who amounted to sixteen thousand men, proclaimed their intention of delivering the king from the influence of evil councillors, and of sacrificing Morton and Sir Reginald Bray, the supposed authors of every grievance, to public vengeance. Audley unadvisedly led his forces into Kent, where Lord Cobham and Lord Abergavenny, the king's steady friends, held almost supreme dominion. Neither gentlemen or yeomen joined their ranks, and disappointed of their expected reinforcements, they directed their route to London, and encamped at Blackheath.* Henry, surrounded by his nobles, and at the head of an army which had been raised for the Scottish campaign, prepared to give battle. His troops were drawn up in three divisions, and taking the command of the last, which he stationed in St. George's Fields, the Earl of Oxford marched forward; but declining from the direct road, passed the insurgents and posted himself in their rear. A third division under the Lord Dawbeny advanced to the attack. Audley's rude troops gained a slight advantage in the outset by the rash impetuosity of the royalist commander, who, having forced Dartford bridge, where the Cornish men made a desperate stand, urged the pursuit too far, and was taken prisoner. A short time however sufficed to shew the insurgents the utter hopelessness of their situation. Hemmed in

June 22, 1499.

* Bacon.

on all sides, their retreat cut off, and opposed by disciplined soldiers, probably with a hope of gaining an advocate with the king, they released Lord Dawbeny; and after a stout resistance, in which two thousand of their companions were slain, relinquished the fight. Henry reserved Lord Audley, Flammock the lawyer, and his colleague Michael Joseph, for the punishment of treason; but pitying the delusion of the misguided multitude, spared their lives, allowing the soldiers to take ransom for their prisoners. The three principal delinquents suffered the doom of traitors. Lord Audley was led from Newgate to Tower-hill in a "paper coat painted with his own arms, the arms reversed and the coat torn, and there beheaded." His mean associates were executed with greater ignominy at Tyburn. Joseph, the blacksmith, with a spirit worthy of a better cause, triumphed in a fate which he boasted would transmit his name to posterity; and elated by this fond idea, went joyfully to meet a cruel death.*

The fortunes of Perkin Warbeck were on the decline in Scotland. James had again crossed the border, and laid siege to Norham castle, while his marauding bands pillaged the country as far as the Tees; but the approach of the Earl of Surrey, at the head of twenty thousand men, warned him to retreat; and compelled to abandon his attempt upon the castle, he returned ingloriously home, followed closely by the English army, who revenged the injuries sustained on the border, by carrying fire and sword throughout the Scottish frontier.

James now began to be weary of a war in which

* Bacon.

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he had gained so little honour: and Henry possessing an active friend in the Spanish ambassador, negociations were renewed, and the interests of Perkin Warbeck sacrificed to a new system of policy. The adventurer either perceiving that the king's ardour in his favour had cooled, or in consequence of an even less ambiguous intimation, prepared to leave Scotland. His young and beautiful bride, undaunted by the perils which environed the dangerous path now opening before her husband's anxious gaze, refused to quit his side, and abandoned a brilliant court, her home, her country and her friends, to follow the wanderer's desperate fortunes.

*Warbeck sailed from Scotland with four ships and a few companions, his fourteen hundred followers having dwindled to six score, and thus slenderly attended he proceeded to Ireland, in the futile hope of inducing the Earl of Desmond to join him; disappointed in this expectation, the disturbed state of Cornwall offered a new scene for his ambitious projects, and crossing the channel he cast anchor in Whitsand Bay. Thence marching to Bodmin, he summoned the disaffected to rally round the banners of Richard IV. Defeat had not yet tamed the fierce spirits of the Cornish malecontents: three thousand men declared for the pretended prince, and Warbeck's army swelled to double that number ere it appeared before the walls of Exeter. The insurgents laid siege to this city, but were repulsed by the vigorous loyalty of the inhabitants; destitute of artillery or other destructive engines, necessary for the assault of a fortified place, Warbeck after vainly

* Hall.

trying to make a breach in the walls with crows, iron bars, and such rude instruments as his ill-equipped army afforded, sought to force an entrance by setting fire to one of the gates; but was again defeated.* The besieged turned the device against their adversaries, they raised a burning pile within the gate, whose fierce consuming flames opposed an effectual barrier while they threw up new walls and dug fresh entrenchments. Completely baffled, Warbeck, on the approach of the surrounding nobility, who hastened with their retainers to relieve the city, abandoned the attempt, retiring with the loss of two hundred men, slain in an endeavour to scale the walls. CHAP. XVI.

The failure of the enterprise damped the ardour of many of Warbeck's followers: the small army was thinned by frequent desertions, but he was encouraged to proceed to Taunton, by warm assurances of faithful adherence from the Cornish men, who offered to shed their life blood in his service. Yet even while thus advancing, Warbeck was not indifferent to the means of securing a retreat, and the anxiety which he manifested to approach within a convenient distance of the sanctuary of Beaulieu, betokened a deep consciousness of his inability to cope with the might of Henry's troops.

The king rejoiced when he heard that his enemy had ventured upon English ground; he put the royal army in motion, and marched westward to give the invader battle. Warbeck, betraying a craven spirit unworthy of his boasted name, and the unsullied banner of York's proud rose, affected to

* Bacon.

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make preparations for the approaching field, but dismayed by the appearance of the king's forces shrank from the encounter. No spark of the devoted ardour of the Plantagenets burned in the breast of this degenerate youth; he could not resolve like the illustrious ancestors whom he had claimed, to snatch a crown from hostile spears or die in the attempt; and under cover of the night withdrew from his more hardy soldiers, and accompanied by sixty friends, rode with breathless haste to Beaulieu, where registering his name, he obtained the privileges of sanctuary.

*The Cornish men, deserted by their leader, submitted unconditionally to the king, who "never cruel when he was secure," with the exception of a few of the most desperate amid the ringleaders, received them to mercy. Henry dispatched five hundred horse in pursuit of the fugitive, but they came up too late to cut off his retreat, and drawing a line of circumvallation round the sanctuary, kept him a hopeless prisoner in an asylum which they dared not invade.

The Lady Katherine, Warbeck's wife, had been left at St. Michael's Mount; too feminine for the government of a fortress, she made no resistance, and yielding gracefully to the king's command, was conducted into Henry's presence. Her surpassing loveliness and gentle manners touched the monarch with pity and admiration.* Downcast and trembling when brought before him she blushed, and burst into tears; Henry receiving her, it is said,† not only with compassion, but with affection, soothed her

* Bacon. † Bernard Andrews. Bacon.

grief by assurances of friendship and protection, and his character has never appeared to so much advantage as in this interview, when with almost parental tenderness he calmed the fears of weeping beauty. Strictly performing his promise, the king assigned an honourable station to his fair prisoner in the service of the queen; afterwards a distinguished ornament at the English court, she received the appellation formerly given to her husband, but which seemed more appropriate to her delicate beauty than to the doubtful claim of Perkin Warbeck, and was styled "the White Rose." Henry honoured the inhabitants of Exeter with marks of peculiar favour; entering the city with royal triumph, he unfastened the sword which he wore, from his side, and presenting it to the mayor, directed that it should ever afterwards be carried before the chief magistrate in commemoration of the service which the civil authorities had rendered to the crown.*

Warbeck soon grew weary of the monotony of his retreat, his restless spirit panted to be again in action; an assurance of pardon was held out by the king, who was anxious to obtain possession of his person; and hopeless of effecting an escape through the enemy's lines, he accepted the offered mercy, and upon his surrender was conducted to the monarch's court. Henry would not vouchsafe the honour of an interview to his fallen rival; curiosity, however, induced him to survey the captive through a window, and not only keeping his word inviolate, his conduct towards Warbeck was marked by extraordinary lenity: though directing that watchful

* Bacon.

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eyes should be continually upon him; he was not placed under a regular guard, and suffered no other restraint than that which was necessary to prevent his flight.

When the royal train moved to the capital, Warbeck rode in the king's suite, purposely exposed to the gaze of the citizens; and crowds pressed eagerly to behold the man whose adventures had engrossed so large a portion of the public attention: a dangerous experiment, had not Henry not only felt himself assured of Warbeck's imposture, but was also aware that his claims were treated with contempt by the reflecting portion of the community. In order that the whole city might view the alleged representative of the House of York, he was conveyed leisurely on horseback, "though not," says Bacon, "in any ignominious fashion," through Cheapside and Cornhill to the Tower, and thence back again to Westminster, where, still experiencing the king's lenity, he was merely desired to keep within the precincts of the palace.

During Warbeck's sojourn at Westminster he was repeatedly examined before the council, but Henry did not publish the result of these investigations; the profound secrecy which the king observed has given rise to much curious speculation. Several modern writers have attributed this mysterious silence to the corroborating testimony of Warbeck's disclosures with his previous claim; but if the prisoner's communications were of this dangerously convincing nature, the king committed a strange oversight in allowing him to be at large in the palace, continually in the sight of the still-existing

friends of Edward IV., who had now an opportunity of hearing his story from his own lips, and under the eyes of the princesses, the companions of the Duke of York's infancy. A single anecdote connected with the occurrences which took place in the sanctuary at Westminster, when the queen fled with her children from Gloucester's tyranny, a melancholy period, which must have been deeply impressed upon the mind of an intelligent child, would have brought strong confirmation to the hearts of sisters, who, unless deaf to every feeling of nature, would have warmly espoused the cause of so near and so unfortunate a relative. CHAP. XVI.

Warbeck's feverish temperament could not endure the gentle bondage which the king had imposed; after a residence of six months in the palace he found means to effect his escape, and fled towards the sea coast. The fugitive's evasion was soon discovered, an alarm raised, and effectual measures taken to arrest him in his flight. Warbeck found the roads strongly guarded. Destitute of friends to whom he could apply for assistance and concealment, and menaced with imprisonment at every step, the spirit which had prompted him to desperate enterprise quailed at the approach of danger; he again sought refuge in sanctuary, and implored the protection of the prior of the monastery at Sheen, who, we are told by Bacon, was esteemed "a holy man, and much reverenced in those days." The charitable monk undertook to plead the suppliant's cause with Henry, and by his pious solicitations wrung a promise from the king that he would spare the offender's life. Warbeck reconducted to London,

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no longer experienced the lenity which had formerly lightened his captivity;* Henry doomed him to the most abject degradation; he stood for two successive days in the stocks at Westminster Hall, and the standard in Cheapside, and on both occasions read aloud to the listening multitude a confession which he had previously signed: it was, however a meagre and imperfect statement, relating chiefly to the pretender's birth and parentage, who represented himself to be a native of Tournay, the son of John Orbeck and Catherine di Fars; and after a laboured history of his early occupations, and a tedious account of the names and calling of his several relations, declared that, landing at Cork, his silk dress attracted the public attention; and prompted by the suggestion of the natives, who fancied from his attire that he must be of royal descent, he assumed the name of Richard Plantagenet; then merely stating that he was invited to France by Charles VIII., and enumerating the different countries which he had visited previous to his landing in England, omitted every circumstance connected with his transactions with foreign princes. Public curiosity, strongly excited, was disappointed by this dry detail, but it was not consistent with Henry's policy to allow the most interesting part of Warbeck's confession to transpire; he selected those facts alone which suited his present purpose, and would suffice to satisfy the people respecting the pretender's origin: the whole narrative of Warbeck's eventful life would in all probability have involved the names of persons, whose negociations with the

* Bacon.

adventurer it would have been unwise to disclose; and Henry anxious to maintain the friendship which he had so strenuously cultivated with his neighbours, might be unwilling to embroil himself by exposing the crooked policy which had directed their councils. After suffering his disgraceful punishment, Warbeck was committed to close imprisonment in the Tower.

The failure of two adventurers who had been patronized by nobles and potentates, was insufficient to check the ruling passion of the age, a third impostor started up in the person of Ralph Wulford, a Suffolk scholar, who, directed by the advice of an intriguing priest, undertook to represent the Earl of Warwick. The friar and his pupil left the place of their residence and proceeded into Kent; and it being whispered abroad that the unfortunate heir of Clarence had died in his captivity, Wulford shortly after the publication of this report confided a marvellous secret to the ears of his associates. Deceived by the impostor's assurances, many credulous persons believed that the Earl of Warwick had escaped from his dismal prison by the assistance of the friendly ecclesiastic, and the friar perceiving the impression which these falsehoods had produced, even ventured to preach a sermon in which, after relating the adventures of the pretended Warwick, he exhorted his auditors to take up arms in the cause of this persecuted prince.* The priest and his luckless instrument were soon awakened from their day-dreams, both were apprehended, and the latter suffered death; respect for the church preserved the

* Hall.

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more guilty accomplice from a similar doom, and he was sentenced to perpetual imprisonment.

In the mean time Perkin Warbeck's perturbed spirit precipitated the fall of the last of the Plantagenets; whether from accident or design he had been permitted to correspond with his fellow captive, and either falling into the snare artfully prepared by others, or following his own impetuous councils alone, he rashly resolved to renew the struggle with Henry. In consequence of large promises of future reward, four of the warders were won over, or pretended to be persuaded to connive in the escape of both the prisoners; it was agreed that they should murder the lieutenant of the Tower, and afterwards conduct the Earl of Warwick and Perkin Warbeck to a place of security; but before this ill-concerted scheme could be carried into execution the conspiracy was discovered, a catastrophe which might easily have been anticipated; but Warbeck deceived by his own vain self-confidence rushed headlong into the very jaws of destruction, and his helpless companion, reduced by dreary and unbroken solitude to a state of mental imbecility, blindly followed the desperate council of rash or of hypocritical advisers.

Warbeck had now sinned beyond all hope of pardon, he was arraigned at Westminster and received sentence of death; his early friend O'Water, the mayor of Cork, was also condemned and suffered
1499. with him. At the place of execution both criminals acknowledged their guilt, and asked forgiveness of the king. Warbeck again read his confession, and
Nov. 16. attesting its truth with his dying breath, went through the last and keenest trial with decent for-

titude. Eight other persons belonging to the Tower, who were concerned in this conspiracy, were likewise condemned to die, but of these only two underwent their sentence.

Henry had long perceived that the troubles which agitated his kingdom originated in the restless anxiety of an obscure yet active party, to place Edward Plantagenet on the throne. The imprisonment of this ill-starred prince, though both cruel and illegal, might have been in some degree palliated as an act of fatal necessity: and the liberation of the male representative of the House of York even at this prosperous period of Henry's reign would perhaps have been more generous than politic; but no sophistry could excuse the infliction of deeper injuries on one who had already suffered a tedious and rigorous confinement solely on account of his royal descent. Warwick's destruction was a stretch of tyrannic power equally barbarous and uncalled for, a sanguinary stain upon the House of Lancaster more dark and disgraceful than those with which its former violent usurpation, and over-weening ambition, had dyed the crimson leaves of its blushing rose.

The king, wise, brave, and fortunate, had repelled the most dangerous efforts of his numerous adversaries: rebellion lay prostrate before him; and firmly established on the throne he had no longer anything to fear from the machinations of Warwick's dispirited friends; but the untiring exertions of treason had unhappily accustomed Henry to shed blood: sparing at his first accession of human life, he had been provoked to sanction repeated executions, and his heart

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though not naturally cruel became callous and unpitying: he brooded over the means of removing a rival so long the object of his jealous fear, and with a mockery of justice which deepened his crime, endeavoured to screen himself from the opprobrium of Edward Plantagenet's murder by dragging his luckless prisoner to a public trial. The unfortunate prince confessed that he had attempted to escape from the Tower with a design to raise the retainers of his family in the support of Perkin Warbeck's pretended claim, and upon his own acknowledgment was condemned by a heartless tribunal of peers, Henry's too subservient ministers, who thus shared in their master's guilt. The Earl of Oxford, as lord steward, pronounced judgment, and the last, the most helpless and unoffending prince of the male line of the Plantagenets, fell a bleeding sacrifice to the unconquerable hatred of the House of Lancaster. The illustrious name which had flourished in England for the space of three hundred and thirty-one years, from the accession of Henry II. was extinguished by this cruel outrage on the persecuted heir of Clarence.

Nov. 28, 1499.

The public voice was raised in loud reprobation of Henry's inhumanity, and the king, though usually not unwilling to brave the censure incurred by measures which he deemed necessary for his own or for the nation's welfare, was upon this occasion anxious to exonerate himself by ascribing Warwick's execution to the King of Spain's earnest suggestions. Negociations for a marriage were now on foot between Arthur Prince of Wales, and the Princess Catherine of Arragon, and letters were shown from

Ferdinand the intended bride's father, in which he said "that he saw no assurance of his (Arthur's) succession as long as the Earl of Warwick lived, and that he was loth to send his daughter to troubles and dangers."* Catherine long afterwards recollected the melancholy circumstances which had preceded her entrance into England, and attributed her subsequent misfortunes to the judgment of heaven against a marriage which had been sealed with blood.

Warwick's death terminated the impostures of the Yorkists, and henceforward Henry's government was undisturbed by pretenders to the throne.

Bacon.

CHAPTER XVII.

Respect paid to Henry by foreign Princes—Henry's Attention to the national Interests—Act passed by the Parliament—Abolition of Badges—Rigid Enforcement of the Law—Change produced by Henry's Policy—Fortunate Events springing from his Alliances with Spain and Scotland—Infractions of the Scots—Proposals for a permanent Peace—Joy of the English People—Splendour of Margaret's Cavalcade—Magnificence of the Earl of Northumberland—Gallantry of James—Slender Portion given with the Queen—Arrival of the Princess Catharine of Arragon—Henry's unceremonious Visit—Bacon's Eulogium of Bishop Fox—The Entrance to London—The Pageant—Order of the Procession—Celebration of Mass—The Princess visits the Queen—Marriage of Arthur and Catharine—Magnificent Tournaments—and Disguisings—the Duke of York's Feat in the Dance—Costliness and Quantity of the King's Plate—Rich Dress of Lord Vaux—Suppositions concerning his Poetry—Death of Prince Arthur—Affliction of the King and Queen—Grief of the Court of Spain—Proposal for the second Marriage of the Princess.

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ENGLAND, under a monarch who studied its best and truest interests, attained a high rank amongst the nations of Europe; and Henry, though owing no part of his ascendance to foreign conquest, received the strongest and most flattering demonstrations of respect from surrounding potentates. The King of Scotland solicited an alliance which he had formerly declined. The Archduke of Austria saluting him as "father, patron and protector," pressed forward

to hold the stirrup of his horse. The Pope Alexander VI. invited him to head a new crusade; and Louis XII. of France, the successor of Charles VIII., eagerly ratified the treaty which his predecessor had signed, and agreed to pay the annual pension by which France became tributary to England.* Henry, though not a learned prince, knew the value of science, and encouraged it by the careful education which he bestowed upon his sons. In his long residence in Bretagne he had witnessed the immense advantages which are derived from commerce; and in all his foreign transactions he earnestly attended to the welfare of the trading portion of the community. England was also indebted to the first of the Tudors for some of its wisest and most beneficial statutes. "His laws," says Bacon, "are deepe and not vulgar: not made upon the spurre of a particular occasion for the present, but out of providence for the future, to make the estate of his people still more and more happy; after the manner of the legislators in ancient and more heroical times."

In the repeated alternations of the crown between the rival roses, the vanquished of either party had been arraigned as traitors, and were placed at the mercy of the conqueror. Henry, though aware that the certainty of confiscation, and the peril of death, stimulated the exertions both of nobles and commons in the field, yet endeavoured to obviate the melancholy consequences which followed defeat, by the introduction of a new act,† which declared that no person who should draw his sword in favour of

* Bacon. † Parliament Rolls.

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the reigning king should be subjected to the penalty of treason, or suffer forfeiture for his faithful service. Happily the rage for civil war had subsided, and Henry, by enforcing a statute which had been passed in former reigns, but very ill observed, struck the last blow to the declining power of the nobles. It has been already seen that the vast number of retainers attached to the train of a great lord, the insolent minions of his pride, and his supporters in the boldest acts of treason, had enabled turbulent spirits to beard the king upon his throne, to insult the laws, and to kindle the devouring flame of civil war. Henry peremptorily forbade the distribution of liveries and badges to their vassals by the powerful lords of his court; nor would he, under any circumstances which might be supposed to palliate the offence, pardon the infraction of this salutary law. A case, strongly illustrating the king's impartial severity, is related by Bacon. "There remayneth to this day, a report that the king was on a time entertained by the Earl of Oxford, that was his principall servant both for war and peace, nobly and sumptuously at his castle at Henningham. And at the king's going away, the earl's servants stood, in a seemely manner, in their liverie coats, with cognisances, ranged on both sides, and made the king a lane. The king called the earl to him, and said, 'My lord, I have heard much of your hospitality, but I see it is greater than the speech. These handsome gentlemen and yeomen, which I see on both sides of me, are sure your meniall servants.' The earl smiled and said, 'It may please your grace, that were not for mine ease. They are most of them

my retainers; they are come to doe me service at such a time as this, and chiefly to see your grace.' The king started a little, and said, 'By my faith, my lord, I thanke you for your good cheare, but I may not endure to have my lawes broken in my sight. My attorney must speak with you.' And it is part of the report that the earle compounded for no lesse than fifteen thousand marks." Henry's rigorous exaction of the fine imposed for an offence committed by one of his best friends, has branded his name with the epithet of avaricious tyrant. But the Earl of Oxford gave too dangerous an example to the rest of the nobility to pass uncensured, if Henry really intended to abolish this injurious practice. Few of the king's regulations were productive of more general utility. Immense multitudes, hitherto trained solely to war, and ready to engage in any quarrel for the sake of pay or spoil, were now compelled to turn their attention to manufactures and to commerce; and noblemen, no longer spending their immense incomes in rude hospitality to the idle crowd who filled their halls, introduced new luxuries, encouraged the useful arts, and gave more beneficial employment to industrious artizans. The middling and lower classes of the nation rose to respectability and opulence as aristocratic power declined; and though probably not contemplating or intending the astonishing effects which resulted from his political system, Henry, in emancipating the people from their vassalage, gave them a preponderating influence in the state, to which we are in a great degree indebted for our present happy constitution.

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Other important national advantages may also be traced to the reign of the wisest and most fortunate of the Lancastrian princes. Henry's foreign alliances were the sources of infinite blessings to the realm; the marriage of his two sons with Catherine of Arragon was the remote cause of the reformation in the established faith, a fortuitous circumstance arising from unforeseen events, and therefore not attributable either to the king's desire or to his judgment; for though not bigoted in his religion, Henry was too good a catholic to have meditated the destruction of the papal church, even could such a result have entered into human calculation: but in the negociations with Scotland, the king perceived the possibility of that prosperous union between the two crowns, which in little more than a hundred years was destined to take place. His councillors equally quick-sighted, but less discerning, objected to the marriage of the Princess Margaret with James IV., lest in default of heirs born to the king's sons, the realm of England should devolve to its Scottish neighbours, an event which they deprecated as prejudicial to the interests of the country. "Whereunto," says Bacon, "the king himself replied, 'that if that should bee, Scotland would bee but an accession to England, and not England to Scotland, for that the greater would draw the lesse: and that it was a safer union for England than that of France.' This," adds the historian, "passed as an oracle, and silenced those that moved the question."

The truce between England and Scotland had been very ill observed by the predatory tribes who

dwelled upon the borders. The frequent descents of the Scots in the vicinity of Norham castle, though hitherto of a peaceable nature, alarmed the jealousy of the garrison, and a quarrel ensued which ended in the loss of lives on both sides. The English being the aggressors in this renewal of hostilities, James complained loudly of the violation of the truce; but on the representations of Fox Bishop of Durham, the monarch's resentment was appeased, and he offered to enter into a closer alliance with England, by espousing Henry's eldest daughter. The king joyfully acceded to the proposal, and the preliminaries were immediately adjusted. The extreme youth of Margaret, and the necessity of obtaining a dispensation from the pope, together with other arrangements, prevented the marriage from taking place until nearly three years after the commencement of the negociations; but in January 1502 the parties were solemnly betrothed to each other in the queen's chamber, the Earl of Bothwell being appointed as the proxy for King James.

Intelligence of this fortunate event was published to the people at Paul's Cross, and notwithstanding the long and rancorous hostility which had subsisted between the two nations, the citizens of London received the news with the most unequivocal demonstrations of joy; bonfires blazed through the streets, the bells rang out exhilarating peals, and the populace animated by twelve hogsheads of claret, which were broached in the thoroughfares, filled the air with loud acclamations.

In the following year the young bride quitted England, the king her father conducted her to Colli-

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weston, the palace of her venerable grandmother, whence attended by the whole court she departed on her journey. A select train of the nobility were appointed as her escort to Scotland, the remainder after having accompanied her a mile upon the road, kissed her and bade her farewell. The Earl of Kent, and the Lords Strange, Hastings, and Willoughby, proceeded in her suite as far as York. The princess rode on a palfrey elegantly caparisoned, and led by three footmen; a magnificent litter drawn by two horses followed, in which for greater state she made her entry into the different towns; her presence was welcomed in every place with enthusiastic joy. Upon the borders of every county she was met by the high-sheriffs, attended by all the provincial nobility and gentry in their most costly attire, who formed a little court around her, and quitted her only when relieved by similar deputations. The magistrates of the several towns wherein the royal traveller reposed, prepared pageants and orations in her honour; and the clergy welcomed her with processions, masses, and music. A band of minstrels and a company of players were attached to her suite; and resting at York, Durham, and Newcastle, her whole route afforded a continual scene of feasting and revelry. At York the Earls of Surrey and Northumberland met the royal cavalcade, and conducted it to Scotland with, if possible, increased splendour. Thus says Hall: "This fayre ladye was conveyghed with a great company of lordes, ladies, knyghtes, esquyres and gentlemen, till she came to Berwicke, and from thence to a village called Lanbreton Kirk in Scotland, where

the king with the flower of Scotland was ready to receive her, to whome the Earl of Northumberland according to his commission delivered her. The Scottes that day I assure you were not behynde, but farre above, both in apparel and ryche jewels, and massy chayines: but above other the Erle of Northumberland, what for the ryches of his cote beyng goldsmithe's worke, garnyshed with perle and stone, and what for the costly apparel of his henchmen, and galaunt trappers of their horsses, besides iiii hundred tall men, well horsed and appareled in his colour, that he was esteemed bothe of the Scottes and Englishmen more lyke a prince than a subject. Then was the lady conveyed to the towne of Edenboroughe, and then the day after King James the iiii, in the presence of all his nobilitie, espoused the sayde faire princes, and feasted the English lordes, and shewed to them justes and other pastimes, very honourably after the fashion of his rude country. When all thinges were done and finished according to their commission, the Earl of Surrey with all the Englishe lordes and ladies returned into their countrey, gevynge more prayse to the manhoode than to the good maner and nurture of Scotland."

The king frequently visited his bride upon her progress, and when she drew near to Edinburgh mounted her palfrey and rode with her behind him through the streets of the city. Scotland not having yet acquired the refinement of its southern neighbours to whom such an exhibition would have now appeared uncouth, although the young queen's aunt the Duchess Dowager of Burgundy had quitted London in the same style, being mounted on a pillion

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behind the great Earl of Warwick, but England in times which modern elegance would pronounce barbarous had evinced a rapid improvement in manners. The marriage ceremony was performed by the Archbishop of Glasgow, and six days were devoted to its celebration in a succession of feasts, tournaments and banquets.*

Aug. 8. 1503.

James received a very small portion with his queen, thirty thousand nobles, a sum equivalent to ten thousand pounds, which the English monarch with his usual attention to economy drew from his overflowing coffers as the dowry of his eldest daughter; but Henry at the head of a powerful kingdom, never soared above the narrow notions of the Earl of Richmond, or forgot those early lessons of parsimony which he had been taught when compelled to support himself on a paltry stipend during the years of his adversity.

In October 1501, the Princess Catherine of Arragon, daughter of Ferdinand and Isabella, landed in England after a tempestuous voyage. The king accompanied by his son met the royal bride at Dogmersfield, where exhausted by the fatigues of a long and boisterous passage she had retired to rest; but Henry suspecting that she was purposely secluded visited her bedside, and requesting her to rise, renewed the marriage contract without an hour's delay, being prompted to this apparently strange and rough welcome by the information of the Pro-

* The author regrets that the bulk of the present volume obliges her to omit the account of Margaret's journey to Scotland, compiled from the entertaining Diary of the Herald, which is to be found in vol. iv. of Leland's Collection.

thonotary of Spain, from whom he learned that the nobles composing the escort of the princess had been strictly enjoined to adhere to the most rigid system of Spanish etiquette, the orders issued by the King of Spain being imperative that "they should in no manner of wise permit their lady to have any meeting, nor to use any manner of communication, neither to receive any companye, until the inception of the very daye of the solemnization of the marriage."* Henry declaring that he would rule in his own kingdom, broke through all ceremony; and displaying more anxiety for the alliance than attention to the comforts of the weary traveller, introduced the Prince of Wales to his affianced bride. CHAP. XVII.

The king upon this happy occasion spared no expense, and the princess was conveyed to the metropolis with fitting pomp and splendour. Bacon tells us, that "the manner of her receiving, and the manner of her entrie into London, and the celebritie of the marriage, were performed with great and true magnificence, in regard of cost, shew, and order. The chiefe man that took the care was Bishop Fox; who was not onely a grave councellour for war or peace, but also a good surveyor of works, and a good master of the ceremonies, and any thing else that was fit for the active part belonging to the service of court, or state of a great king." The worthy prelate appears to have deserved his noble historian's warm panegyric; for by the glowing descriptions of Hall and other writers, we learn that all former entertainments were eclipsed by the surpassing splen-

* Leland's Collection.

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dour which distinguished the nuptials of this illustrious but unfortunate pair.

*Attended by her own retinue from Spain richly attired in gorgeous and foreign habits, and a large proportion of the spiritual and temporal lords of England gallantly mounted, together with a numerous train of knights and esquires, the princess passed through Southwark and entered the city over London bridge, the spot on which the first pageant was erected. A lofty superstructure of two stories wherein were seated two beautiful ladies, the representatives of Saint Catherine and Saint Ursula, seated amidst a company of virgins, and the whole surmounted by angels scattering incense as the procession passed. The walls of the building were gaily decorated and hung with curtains of blue and red tissue. Two columns arose in front painted with ostrich feathers, red roses and portcullises, and crowned with a lion rampant bearing a pennon emblazoned with the arms of England, and "all the hoole worke corvyn of tymbre gylt and peynted with gold and asur." Each of the saints recited a long oration in verse. In the widest part of Gracechurch-street appeared a goodly castle bearing upon the battlements the splendid devices and badges of the united houses of York and Lancaster. An armed knight called "Pollicie," stood in the lower gate, and above him a second warrior who represented "Nobleness," at whose right hand stood a bishop the personification of Virtue. The king's arms

* The annexed description of a part of the pomp and pageantry which welcomed Catherine to England is taken from a paper in the Antiquarian Repertory, printed from a MS. in the Herald's College.

waved over the tower and on the highest point of the "hole pageant a rede dredfull dragon holdyng a staff of iron, and on the staf a great crown of gold." Policy, Nobleness, and Virtue greeted the princess with compliments of three and four stanzas each. The third pageant erected upon Cornhill was of a more allegorical and complicated description. Job, Raphael, and Gabriel, appeared amidst celestial spheres, attended by Boetius and angels, and encompassed by heraldic emblems. The fourth grand spectacle which arrested the progress of the bride represented the sphere of the sun, a wheel fantastically wrought with strange figures and kept in motion by three armed knights. At the standard in Cheape, all that the genius of the director, aided by the most lavish expenditure could effect was put in requisition to dazzle the eyes of the gazers. The custom of the age tolerated an exhibition which in more refined days would be regarded with horror. The throne of the Deity surrounded by angels "singing full harmoneously as it had been in a church, with a sweet and solempn noise," was placed in a pavilion richly decorated with pinnacles, windows, and fanes, with the prophets standing upon pedestals, and casts of lions, dragons, and greyhounds of painted lead; "and this was called the temple of God, exorting and moovyng the goodly princess to the love of God and of holy cherche." The king, anxious to be a spectator of the procession stationed himself secretly in a merchant's house near the standard of Chepe which commanded a view of this splendid device, attended by the prince and several lords of his court, and in another house the queen with her

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daughters and the Countess of Richmond were assembled, but withdrawn a little from public view. The streets were barred for the convenience of the spectators, and the carriage road covered with gravel. The upper "windows, leads, guttures and battilments" were filled with yeomen of the guard, and the pavement beneath was lined with the servants of the prince and of the nobles. The lord mayor on horseback attired in crimson satin preceded by his sword bearer, headed the procession; he was followed by the recorder in black velvet, the two sheriffs, and the aldermen in their scarlet robes. The heralds and the officers at arms came next, and after these appeared "six goodly gallants belonging to the Earl of Essex in yellow sarsenet with many ostrich feathers, upon right pleasant coursers of courage, trapped and beset, full of silver bells, advancing their horses in the most curious manner;" and behind them rode the gentlemen belonging to the Duke of Buckingham, followed by the knyghts and esquires appointed by the king. The Earls of Northumberland and Kent and the Duke of Buckingham preceded a company of minstrels with "trumpets, shalmewes, and sackbuts in great number," who accompanied the princess from Spain; and next appeared the bride's Spanish retinue, each gentleman according to his degree, riding at the right hand of an Englishman of equal rank. The princess, mounted upon "a great mule richly trapped after the manner of Spain," rode between the Duke of York and the pope's legate; she was attired in a rich dress of the costume of Spain, and wore upon her head "a litell hatte fashonyd like a cardinall's hatte, and fastened

with a lace of gold, her faire auburn hair hung down over her shoulders," and a coif of carnation colour fell like a veil from her hat, parted in the centre to display her tresses; she was attended by a train of footmen both of her own and those appointed to wait upon her by the king; then followed the female procession: four English ladies habited in cloth of gold, rode by the side of four ladies of Spain, mounted on mules, with strange saddles of foreign make, crossed in front and behind with staves. Three young English ladies of honour next appeared, borne in a horse litter, and after them a long train of chairs, led horses, ladies upon palfreys, and running footmen. The whole being closed by the yeomen of the nobles who attended the procession, all in a livery, and on horseback. The singular garb of some of the ladies, whose apparel is described as "beauteous and marvellous," and the caparison of the horses, of which many were trapped in the Spanish manner "with high cushions on their backs, and large stirrups of gilt of a marvellous fashion," heightened the interest of the scene. The procession halted before the sixth and last pageant, which was erected at the entrance of St. Paul's, a stately edifice composed of clusters of pillars, "goodly painted and gilt, and hung with pictures of lions, tigers, and dragons;" broad flights of stairs led on each side to an upper floor, whereon stood the seven virtues, Faith, Hope, Charity, Justice, Temperance, Prudence, and Fortitude, and about them many virgins in white. Above on a second platform three chairs were placed: and in the centre, "full pleasantly beseen in purple velvet, sat one called Honour,"

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upon her right and left hand were cushions, upon which were placed a sceptre, and a crown of gold, in token that they were reserved and kept for the prince and princess," the whole surmounted by tabernacles, pinnacles, coats of arms, and badges. The mayor, sheriffs, and aldermen saluted the princess at the entrance of St. Paul's, and presented her with costly gifts, consisting, we are told, of "moch treasure and great plentee of plate, of silver and gilt, as basons and potts filled with coin to a great sum." The offering was courteously accepted, "and with a goodly countenance and demeanour, and in lykewise her goodness full amiable, after most lernyd manner, she received with great thanks the plate and gold, and especially their good minds." At the door of the church the fair stranger was received by the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Bishop of Durham, and many other prelates, with the choir of St. Paul's, in procession, entering the cathedral she made an offering at the high altar, and at the shrine of St. Erkenwald, and this pious duty performed proceeded to the bishop's palace. The chronicler tells us that it was no marvel that men deemed and judged Almighty God with this marriage content, since that notwithstanding "the wonderful preyse of the people, the cruelnous of their cursours and sterne horses, the jeopardies of standing in high places, windows, and houses, in the streets of the City of London, yet there was that day no mischance of oppressing men, women, nor child, neither stroke with horse, nor unfortunate fall, praised be Almighty God."

On the Saturday following the king gave audience

to the lords and ambassadors of the Princess of Arragon's Spanish escort, who delivered up their charge to him and were dismissed with courteous acknowledgments. The same morning the bride elect paid a visit to the queen, and after spending the day in dance and disport, was conveyed back in the evening to the place of her residence by torch-light. CHAP. XVII.

The marriage ceremony took place on the fourteenth of November, and on this occasion the interior of St. Paul's was richly decorated, being hung with cloth of arras, and a raised pathway covered with red say erected, which led to a platform built for the accommodation of the nuptial party. The king and queen were conveniently placed, in a latticed closet, which overlooked the spot. The Lady Cecill bore the bride's train, and both the princess and her betrothed were arrayed in white satin, the former wore a coif of white silk upon her head, edged with a border of gold, pearls, and precious stones, an inch and a half broad, which fell over her in folds. After the ceremony was over the new married pair shewed themselves to the multitude at the different doors of the church, and were hailed with joyous shouts and cries of King Henry and Prince Arthur. The bridegroom in the presence of the assembled crowd endowed his bride with one third of his property, the royal couple then returned to the altar, and heard mass celebrated by the Archbishop of Canterbury associated with nineteen bishops in their mitres, and having received wine, bread, and spices, the Duke of York led the princess to the bishop's palace, followed by above an hundred 1501.

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ladies and gentlewomen "gorgeously apparelled and richly adorned." All the time of the marriage and mass, a fountain issuing out of the foot of a lofty green hill ran red with wine in the churchyard of St. Paul's. This conduit was encompassed by a paling furnished with a gate, through which the people were admitted to drink its generous stream. The mountain above was covered with green herbs, diversified with rocks and crags of stone, amber, coral, and other "marvellous metals," and crowned upon its topmost height with three trees, bearing red roses, flowers of gold, and fruits, from which oddly enough, sprang armorial bearings, "as though they had been growing." Against the trunks of these three trees leaned effigies of the Kings of England, France, and Spain, all in complete armour, the first standing in a ship, the second up to his knees in the body of a white hart, and the third issuing from the turrets of a castle. The King of England bearing a sword, the other two holding silver bells in their hands, all having their proper escutcheons above their heads.

Amid the rejoicings at this marriage were several splendid tournaments, at the first the shields of the combatants were hung upon artificial trees, luxuriant "with pleasant leaves, flowers, and fruit." The galleries erected for the king and queen communicated by broad flights of stairs with the field, and they had another and more private entrance through Westminster Hall.* Stages covered with red say were provided for the mayor and aldermen, and there were others let out, as in more modern days, for less dis-

* Hall.

tinguished spectators. The ground adjacent to the lists was, we are told, barred "for the excluding of the rudes;" this precaution being taken "as well for the care and regard of their hurt and jeopdies as the distroblyng and impediment of the enactors." Immense multitudes of people were drawn together to witness the sports, filling the stages, windows, walls, and battlements, "so that," says the chronicler, "to sight and perceiving was no thing but only visages and faces, without appearance of bodies." A shrill burst of the trumpets announced the entrance of the challengers: Lord Barnes, Lord Henry of Buckingham, and two knights, appeared in white harness, and mounted upon goodly coursers, and followed by the Duke of Buckingham, in his pavilion of silk white and green, richly ornamented with turrets and pinnacles of curious work, set full of red roses, which was borne by a vast multitude of the duke's retinue, in black and red silk jackets, and attended by many other of his servants and gallants, well horsed and trapped, with spangles of gold and bells. In this splendid array Buckingham and his party paid their obeisances to the king, and afterwards taking their places awaited their antagonists. The challenged entered with equal pomp, the first appearing on horseback on the deck of a ship, under a stately pavilion, the whole of which was carried by his attendants. Sir John Peche, knight, rode with his pavilion of red silk borne over his head. The Lord William of Devonshire came in a red dragon, which was led by a giant, holding an uprooted tree in his hand. The Earl of Essex stationed on a mountain wooded and

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craggy, "with herbs, stones, and marvellous beasts upon the sides," and on its topmost height "a goodly young lady" with flowing locks "pleasantly beseen" followed, and lastly came the Lord Marquis of Dorset, riding in complete harness in the midst of a costly pavilion of cloth of gold; careering round the field this gallant company courteously saluted the king, and then proceeded to commence the sports which one of the commemorating historians* declares to have been "suche marciell feates, suche valiant justes, such vigorous turneys, suche fierce fight at the barreyers, as before that time was of no man had in remembrance." A banquet and disguising followed this splendid exhibition. Henry, his queen, and nobles, assembled in Westminster Hall, which was magnificently furnished for the occasion. The first pageant represented a castle: this piece of machinery was placed upon wheels, and drawn by four wild animals, two of which were lions, and the other a hart and an ibex, seven goodly ladies appeared at the different windows of the fortress, and in each of the turrets "a little child apparelled like a maiden, sang full sweetly and harmoneously," as the cumbrous engine rolled the whole length of the hall. This fantastic device was followed by another equally ingenious. A ship upon wheels, with all her canvass flying, properly trimmed and rigged "as though it had been sayling in the sea," manned by a jovial company, "who in their countenances, speeches, and demeanour, used and behaved themselves after the manner and fashion of mariners."

* Hall.

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A fair lady, attired in a Spanish dress in compliment to the Princess Catharine, was a passenger on board this stately vessel, which cast anchor under the walls of the castle; and representing themselves to be ambassadors from a band of knights, who now entered the hall enclosed in a mountain, the crew sent Hope and Desire, with banners displayed, to solicit the fair dames of the castle in their behalf. The ladies denying all knowledge of the knights, refused audience to their envoys, who taking great displeasure at this repulse, threatened the castle with a siege by the suitors so disdainfully rejected. Sailing directly to the mountain, the mariners reported the ill success of their embassy; and the knights advancing instantly to the assault, the ladies, after a faint shew of resistance, yielded to their prowess, and the whole party danced together "many goodly dances." Prince Arthur and the Lady Cecill next performed two bass dances; the Princess Catherine and one of her ladies danced together after the Spanish manner; and the Duke of York, leading out his sister, the Lady Margaret, after a time finding himself embarrassed by his cumbrous dress, "sodenly cast off his gown and daunced in his jacket with the said Lady Margaret, in so goodly and pleasant manner, that hit was to the king and queen right great and singler pleasure." After the dance had concluded, spices and wine were presented to the king and his guests by five score couple of earls, barons and knights, besides squires having collars and chains of gold about their necks. These noble servitors were followed by yeomen of the guard, bearing pots of wine to re-

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plenish the cups. The spice plates, we are told, were furnished in "a most bounteous manner," with the most esteemed condiments of the time, and "the nombre of spice plates goodly and marvellous," "which," continues the writer, "was the more to be wondred, for that the cupboard was nothing touched, but stode complete garnished and fulfilled not once dimynished." Other tournaments and disguisings followed, rivalling those which preceded them in magnificence; and at a banquet given by the king at Westminster, the prizes were bestowed upon the victors. "First," says our author, "the Duke of Buckingham had given him a rich and precious stone, a diamond of great virtue and price; the Lord Marquis of Dorset, a ruby, and the others precious stones and rings of gold most excellently wrought." These festivals ended, the court made preparations for their removal to Richmond. All the nobles of Henry's court vied with each other in the splendour of their dress and appointments. Sir Nicholas Vaux, the son of a brave knight who had sacrificed his fortunes in the cause of the red rose, and who had signalized himself at the battle of Stoke, was attired in a gown of purple velvet, adorned with pieces of gold so thick and massive, that exclusive of the silk and fur it was valued at a thousand pounds; around his neck he wore a collar of SS weighing eight hundred pounds in nobles. This magnificent and accomplished gentleman was raised to the peerage in the reign of Henry VIII. His name appears amid the list of noble authors; but some of his biographers dispute his claim to literary distinction, being of opinion that his son Thomas was the author of the poetry gene-

rally attributed to his pen. An old writer, quoted by Walpole, observes, that "his lordship's commendation lay chiefly in the facilitie of his meetre and the aptnesse of his descriptions, such as he taketh upon him to make in sundry of his songs, wherein he sheweth the counterfeit action very lively and pleasantly." Antony Wood tells us that "there goes a doleful ditty under his name, which runs thus: 'I loathe that I did love,' and was thought by some to be made on his death bed."

Mourning robes were speedily substituted for the gala dresses which had blazed throughout the court. The bride and bridegroom departed for Ludlow castle, a place which had been formerly selected as the most suitable residence for the heir apparent, who under the direction of a chosen council, and ruling over an extensive principality, acquired early experience in the art of government; but Arthur's constitution was not proof against the severities of winter during an inclement season, and four months after his marriage the nation wept the untimely death of an amiable, accomplished and learned prince. The melancholy account of Arthur's decease was received with universal lamentation, and the king's confessor was selected as the most fitting person to break the intelligence to the unhappy father. Incapable of receiving comfort themselves, the king and queen strove with affectionate solicitation to console each other. Henry, when informed of the premature fate which had deprived them of their eldest son, sent for his consort, and Elizabeth suppressed her own grief to soothe the overwhelming affliction of her sorrowing husband. The par-

April 2, 1502.

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ticulars of this interview are exceedingly interesting, and entirely disprove the assurance which is so frequently given of the king's harsh usage and sullen neglect of the meek heiress of York. "We are told, "That the queen besought his grace that he would first after God remember the weale of his own noble person, the comfort of his realme and of hem. She then said, that my ladie his mother had never no more children but him onely, and that God by his grace had ever preserved him, and brought him where that he was. Over that, howe that God had left him yet a fayre prince, two fayre princesses; and that God is where he was, and we are both young ynough: and that the prudence and wisdom of his grace sponge over all christendome, so that it should please him to take this according thereunto. Then the king thanked her of her good comfort. After that she was departed and come to her owne chamber, natural and motherly remembrance of that great losse smote her so sorrowfull to the hart, that those that were aboute her were faine to send for the king to comfort her. Then his grace, of true gentle and faithfull love, in good hast came and relieved her, and showed her how wise counsell she had given him before: and he for his parte would thanke God for his sonn, and would she should doe in likewise."

Ferdinand and Isabella, the king and queen of Spain, were deeply affected by the unexpected catastrophe which had befallen their youthful son-in-law, and hastened to avert the most disastrous consequences of this melancholy event, a diminution in the friendship which they had so anxiously

maintained with England, by proposing that Henry's surviving son should espouse his brother's widow. The English monarch hesitated; but being unwilling to return the portion of Catherine's dowry which he had already received, entered into fresh negociations for a marriage which it required very little penetration to foresee must be fraught with misery to the bride. Catherine was now in the zenith of youth and beauty, and endeared to the nation by her virtues and accomplishments. Her union with Prince Arthur, who was only her junior by three years, promised to confer mutual felicity; but her intended husband, a boy not yet thirteen years old, could not be expected to view his allotted partner with much complacence; and the circumstance of her previous union, in the event of any disagreement between the parties, menaced the calamity which darkened the latter years of this ill-fated princess, and reduced her heart-broken to the grave. Bent upon obtaining the object which they had so much at heart, these considerations did not influence the minds of Ferdinand and Isabella: a bull was procured from the pope, which authorised the solemnization of their daughter's inauspicious nuptials. Henry, however, did not hurry the marriage, and even cautiously preserved the freedom of his son's choice. The alliance therefore was the act of Henry VIII.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Immense Expenditure of the Nobles at Arthur's Marriage—Misfortunes of the Earl of Suffolk—his rash Acts—his Flight to Burgundy—and Return—Lincoln's pecuniary Involvements—his second Flight with his Brother—Henry's Uneasiness—Arrest of several Nobles—Execution of Tyrrel and Wyndham—Distress of Suffolk—Anathema pronounced against him—Death of the Queen—and of Sir Reginald Bray—Development of Henry's Character after the Decease of his Friends—The King seeks a matrimonial Alliance with the Queen of Naples—his Fastidiousness—and Disappointment—Death of Isabella of Spain—Henry's Alarm—Visit of the Duke of Burgundy—Dilemma of the Stranger—Honours paid to him—Henry's Requests—and ungenerous Conduct—New Marriage Projects—Death of the Duke of Burgundy—Henry aspires to the Hand of Joanna—Faithlessness of Charles V.—Decay of Henry's Health—his Penitence—Original salutary Tendency of his Exactions—Growth of Henry's Avarice—Vain Attempts to repair his Errors—Splendour of his Court—his Attention to Commerce—his extreme Caution—his Clemency—his Attention to the common People—his Conduct to his Wife and Mother—his Courtesy to his Inferiors—his Piety—Death of the King—Conjectures concerning the Dangers awaiting a longer Existence—Extract from Henry's Will—State of the Fine Arts in England—Poets of Henry's Time—Painting—Splendid Suit of the King's Armour—Marriage of Edward IV.'s Daughters.

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THE lavish prodigality which Henry's nobles displayed at the celebration of Prince Arthur's wedding proved fatal to another of the unfortunate

nephews of Edward IV. Upon the death of the Duke of Suffolk Edmund de la Pole, the second son claimed the title and estates of his father; but the king, resolutely bent upon diminishing the power of the nobility and most anxious to depress the fortunes of the Princes of the blood, refused to admit his pretensions. The elder son, John Earl of Lincoln, who fell in rebellion against the government, had been attainted by parliament, and upon the plea that Edmund was his brother's heir and could only claim through him, the unhappy young man was deprived of his inheritance and a small part of the splendid patrimony of his ill-starred house was alone allotted by the king's bounty. The family honours were likewise withheld; and Edmund, not permitted to bear the proud title of Duke granted by Henry VI. to his paternal ancestor, was simply styled Earl of Suffolk.

Edmund's turbulent spirit and imprudent conduct completed his ruin; he committed an outrage which rendered him amenable to the law, and though Henry did not visit this crime with severity, he supported the dignity of offended justice. Suffolk having, as Dugdale tells us, "killed an ordinary person in his wrath," was commanded to plead the king's pardon in court. The haughty delinquent conceiving himself to be dishonoured by this mandate, refused to submit to the indignity of a public trial, and fled to the court of his aunt the Duchess of Burgundy, whence the king induced him to return by an assurance of renewed favour. At the marriage of Prince Arthur, the earl and his brother Richard appeared with splendour more befitting their former

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expectations than their present ruined fortunes. Embarrassed by debts contracted for the magnificent appointments which they exhibited on this occasion, and perhaps disgusted with a court wherein they could not entertain a hope of regaining their lost wealth and honours, these rash nobles quitted England, and placed themselves under the protection of Margaret, the king's ancient enemy. Henry now became seriously alarmed; and with his usual precaution endeavoured to penetrate the designs of the fugitives; he found a ready instrument in Sir Robert Curson, who commanded the castle of Hammes. *The knight, pretending to desert the English monarch's service on account of some alleged affront, insinuated himself into Suffolk's confidence, and basely betrayed his plans. In consequence of Curson's information, William Courtney Earl of Devonshire, who had married Catherine daughter of Edward IV., William De la Pole the exile's brother, Sir William Wyndham, Sir James Tyrrel, and a few other persons of less note, were committed to the Tower. Suffolk's two noble relatives suffered no other inconvenience save imprisonment. Tyrrel and Wyndham accused of aiding the escape of the king's enemy, were condemned to death, and underwent their sentence. Sir James Tyrrel, the inhuman assassin of Edward's children, "against whom" says Bacon, "the blood of the innocent princes did still cry from under the altar," overtaken at length by the tardy hand of justice, suffered the punishment due to his former crime. Suffolk's ungovernable impetuosity had plunged him into a sea of inextri-

* Bacon.

cable difficulties, every hope of mediation between him and the monarch whom he had offended was at an end, and upon the death of his aunt the Dowager Duchess of Burgundy, being reduced to extreme distress, after wandering for some time through Germany he obtained a shelter in the territories of the Archduke Philip.* CHAP. XVIII.

Henry, we are told, about the period in which the execution of Tyrrel and Wyndham took place, pursued his enemies with the thunders of the church: the papal bull which he had procured upon his marriage, anathematizing all those who should disturb the government, was put in requisition; and the Earl of Suffolk and his adherents formally cursed at Paul's Cross.

A few months after the death of Prince Arthur, the nation mourned with affectionate regret the loss of their beloved queen, she died in the Tower of London, a few days subsequent to the birth of a princess, who in a short time followed her mother to the grave. The grace and ornament of her domestic circle, every heart paid its tribute to the truly feminine virtues of this excellent princess; her exemplary conduct as a wife and a parent, characters in which she seemed to forget her claims to sovereignty, elicited the most enthusiastic attachment from all ranks and classes of the community, who evinced the warmth of their esteem and admiration by the simple but expressive appellation of "Good Queen Elizabeth," unanimously conferred upon the gentle heiress of the house of York.†

Henry's feelings upon this melancholy event are

* Bacon. † Hall.

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not recorded, but the blow must have fallen heavily, since it has been proved that he was not insensible to Elizabeth's merits, or to the felicities which attended his union with the fairest blossom which had ever sprung from the white rose.

The king, in the same year, lost also his faithful servant Sir Reginald Bray; Morton another sincere friend had preceded the knight to the grave. Henry valued these councillors not only for their wisdom and integrity, but for the undeviating attachment which they had evinced to his person during the period of his adversity.* Both Morton and Bray, anxiously solicitous for their master's welfare, had been ever ready to bear the odium of any unpopular measure which emanated from the crown. Henry seldom shrank from the responsibility of his actions, "he cared not," says Bacon, "for subterfuge," but the people, prompted by affectionate loyalty, were eager to attribute their monarch's real or imputed errors to the evil advice of his councillors, and it was not until after the decease of these zealous ministers that the nation did justice to their virtues; for Henry's avarice, which had been restrained by the judicious controul of his calumniated friends, assumed a darker character when surrounded by base and interested flatterers; the servile tools of a vice which increased with his years, and dimmed the lustre of a name deservedly renowned, notwithstanding the fatal blemishes occasioned by his too suspicious fear of the rival house.

Henry's declining health and growing infirmities, which were rather the effect of a life of incessant

* Bacon. Hall.

anxiety than of increasing years, did not prevent him from contemplating a second marriage. The riches bequeathed by the late King of Naples to his widow, offered irresistible attractions to a monarch too greedily enamoured of wealth. The lady was young, fair, and accomplished; but cautious in his advances, Henry would not trust the voice of fame, though loud in the praise of her numerous perfections, and sent an especial embassy, consisting of three confidential persons, who under the pretence of carrying letters from the Princess Catherine, his daughter-in-law, to her relatives at the court of Naples, were directed to inform themselves of every particular respecting the mental and personal qualifications of the widowed queen, together with the more interesting intelligence relative to her alleged possessions. Bacon tells us that the instructions given to these gentlemen were exquisitely minute, extending to the complexion, the features, and the stature, the age, conduct, disposition, and manners of the fair object of the scrupulous monarch's choice. The charms and virtues of the princess triumphantly endured the strictest scrutiny, but there was a defalcation in a more material point. Ferdinand, King of Arragon, to whom the kingdom of Naples had devolved, equally unprincipled and rapacious, had deprived the widow of her ample dower, and she was reduced to subsist upon a pension, which he might withdraw at pleasure. This unwelcome intelligence damped Henry's ardour, and he thought no more of the alliance. CHAP. XVIII.

The death of Isabella, Queen of Castille, occasioned Henry considerable uneasiness; he earnestly

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watched the progress of events in Spain, which were deeply interesting in consequence of the strong analogy between his own situation and that of the widowed king.* Ferdinand was compelled to relinquish his matrimonial crown to his daughter Joanna, married to the Archduke Philip, and Henry's foreboding spirit augured evil to himself from this offensive precedent. "And although," says Bacon, "his own case had both steel and parchment more than the other (that is to say, a conquest in the field, and an act of parliament), yet notwithstanding this natural title of descent in bloud, did in the imagination even of a wise man, breed a doubt that the other two were not safe or sufficient."

The consciousness of his defective title haunted Henry's soul like a spectre, hence his restless anxiety respecting every individual connected with the rival house, his unceasing expedients to amass treasure, which he trusted would render him formidable to the whole world, and his jealous fear of the preference of the nation to his own children.

Henry, prompted by these selfish considerations, which formed the dark shade in his character, took an ungenerous advantage of an accident which occurred to the Archduke Philip and his consort
1506. on their voyage from the Netherlands to Castille. A violent storm drove them upon the western coast of England, and the royal pair weary of their long contention with the boisterous elements, determined against the advice of their council to put into the friendly port which offered an asylum to their tempest-tossed ships, and approached Falmouth. The

* Bacon.

natives alarmed by the appearance of a puissant and as they feared a hostile fleet, flew to arms, but upon hearing the occasion of the visit, received their guests with friendly hospitality.* CHAP. XVIII.

Sir Thomas Trenchard, to whose house the Archduke repaired, instantly sent messengers to the king to apprize him of the circumstance, and Henry delighted with so favourable an opportunity of negociating on his own terms, dispatched a courteous but imperative embassy to the too venturous duke. Philip soon perceived the error which he had committed, and would have sought his ships again, but was prevented by the earnest entreaties of his host, and aware that Henry's subjects could not allow him to depart without their master's permission, submitted to an inevitable necessity with a good grace.

The duke's present detention must have been the more grating, since, during the King of England's residence at Calais, though hastening to pay him the most profound demonstrations of respect, he had requested that the place of their interview might be appointed without the walls, alleging as an excuse for this extreme caution, a previous refusal to enter a fortress with the French king;† and though he courteously added, that he knew how to make a distinction between the two monarchs, he would not afford an example which might oblige him to perform the same civility to one whom he trusted less.

The Earl of Arundel speedily arrived, attended by three hundred horse, who to add to the stateliness of their appearance approached the Archduke by torch-

* Bacon. † Bacon.

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light, to the "great admiracion," says Hall, "of all the straingers." Philip, compelled to grant the interview which the King of England requested, hastened to Windsor, leaving the queen to follow more at leisure.

Henry, whilst in reality detaining his visitor in unwelcome captivity, strove to dazzle and deceive him by the splendour of his reception. Five miles from Windsor the Prince of Wales, accompanied by five earls and a gorgeous train of knights magnificently apparelled, met the royal guest upon his road. Henry, attended by all the court, advanced half a mile in honour of the duke, whom he conducted to Windsor castle. The two princes saluted each other with affectionate warmth; but they did not meet on equal terms. Philip observed, "that hee was now punished, for that hee would not come within his walled towne of Calice, when they met last." But the king answered, "That walls and seas were nothing where hearts were open, and that he was here no otherwise but to be served."*

Henry however, whilst heaping civilities on his guest, studied only how to profit by the enforced visit: he soon revealed the secret feelings of a troubled heart, his countenance changed from the hilarity which he had assumed in performing the honours of his court; and drawing the King of Castille on one side, he pressed his arm, and with an anxious solicitude which was probably unfeigned, said,† "Sir, you have been saved upon my coast, I hope you will not suffer me to wrecke upon your's." The King of Castille asked him, "What he meant

* Bacon. † Bacon.

by that speech?" "I mean it," saith the king; "by that same hare-braine wilde fellow, my subject, the Earl of Suffolk, who is protected in your country, and begins to play the fool when all others are weary of it." The King of Castille answered, "I had thought, Sir, your felicitie had beene above those thoughts; but, if it trouble you, I will banish him." The king replied, "Those hornets were best in their nests, and worst when they did flie abroad; that his desire was to have him delivered to him." The King of Castille herewith a little confused, and in a studie said; "That can I not doe with my honour, and lesse with your's; for you will be thought to have used mee as a prisoner." The king presently said, "Then the matter is at an end; for I will take that dishonour upon me, and see your honour is saved." Philip thus constrained to abandon the unfortunate earl, still endeavoured to preserve him from the most fatal effects of Henry's unconquerable jealousy: he hesitated for a moment, and composing his countenance said, "Sir, you give law to mee; but so will I to you. You shall have him; but, upon your honour, you shall not take his life." The king embracing him, said, "Agreed:" and determined not to lose sight of his prey, detained Philip in England until the arrival of the Earl of Suffolk, who was committed to the Tower; where, after the king's decease, left wholly at the mercy of his barbarous successor, without even the pretext of any fresh aggression, he was inhumanly dragged to the block.

Henry also wrung an unwilling consent from the Archduke to sign new commercial regulations, which

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were unfavourable to his Flemish subjects; who, it is said, accustomed to style their agreements with England, "intercursus magnus," branded this odious treaty with the epithet of "intercursus malus."* Nor was Henry's mercenary spirit satisfied with these concessions; not having yet relinquished his matrimonial pursuits, he had revolved the advantage of an alliance with Philip's sister, Margaret Duchess of Savoy, a rich widow; and anxious at the same time to affiance his daughter Mary to Charles the son of Philip and Joanna, he obliged his imprisoned guest to accede to both propositions, to give three hundred thousand crowns as Margaret's portion, and to receive the Princess Mary with an inferior dower. Philip in return received hollow assurances of regard and the order of the garter; his eyes were sated with vain pageantry, whilst thus obliged to stain his honour and sacrifice his interests at the will of his despotic entertainer; and after a protracted residence of three months at the English court, was permitted to depart. Neither of the projected marriages took place.

Philip did not long survive his visit to his new dominions, and the English monarch dazzled by the influence which an alliance with the widowed queen of Castille would give him, both in Spain and Germany, abandoned his intentions respecting the Duchess of Savoy, and sought the hand of Joanna. The unfortunate princess laboured under an aberration of intellect, which prevented her from entering into a second engagement, and Henry, at length

* Bacon.

convinced of the inutility of the pursuit, relinquished his ambitious project. CHAP. XVIII.

Charles of Austria, who was solemnly betrothed to the Princess Mary in 1508 with the usual ceremony, his proxy kissing the bride, and placing a ring upon her finger, afterwards dishonourably retracted his promise, and the deserted lady married Louis XII. of France.

Worn down by infirmity and disease Henry's anxious life drew near its close. The oppressive system which in the vigour of health he had deemed necessary for the furtherance of his political views, to tame the fierce spirits of the nobility, and to repress rebellion by fines rather than by bloodshed, he now feared had been carried too far, and he strove in his latter years to make some reparation for the misery occasioned by the execrable tyranny of his agents. * We are told that Henry's rigorous exactions proceeded from the necessity of subduing the factious and insubordinate tempers of those who employed their wealth in fomenting civil discord, and not "for the greedy desire of riches and hunger of money;" but though commencing with the laudable design of rendering legal impositions subservient to this grand object, the treasures thus accumulated rendered him enamoured of the pursuit, he flattered himself that the end would sanctify the means, and much individual suffering was produced both by his own inflexible adherence to a favourite method, and by the abuse of the laws by his unprincipled ministers. Two of Henry's base tools, Empson and Dudley, bold, acute, and profligate men, indulged

* Grafton. Hall.

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their insatiate rapacity with shameless disregard to their master's reputation. The conduct of these relentless despots has cast an indelible stain upon Henry's memory. The groans of their victims, irretrievably ruined, languishing in prison, and dying of broken hearts, were breathed in bitter accusation of the monarch who sanctioned those arbitrary extortions which plunged whole families into abject poverty. Henry, touched with late remorse, endeavoured to atone for his too rigid exactions. He issued a general pardon for all offences against the crown, with the exception of felony and murder; released all those persons in confinement for debts under forty shillings, by paying the demands of their creditors from his own treasury, and directed that restitution should be made to all those who had been unjustly amerced. The latter injunction was very ill observed, since neither Henry's ministers or those of his successor, were inclined to diminish the riches of the exchequer by redressing the injuries of obscure individuals.

Henry's besetting sin, nursed by the selfish advice of mercenary councillors, became the prominent feature in his character. Hurried away by their detestation of his avarice, many writers have committed great injustice in passing over the monarch's virtues. A liberal patron of humble merit, he encouraged the spirit of commercial enterprise, by freely lending large sums to merchants who were destitute of capital.* His charities were noble and extensive; and in the splendour of his household and the pageantries of his court he had never been surpassed by any former sovereign; whilst he is

* Bacon.

entitled to the exclusive merit of limiting his expenditure to the revenue of the crown. The ancient hospitality, for which the English monarchs had always been so famous, suffered no diminution in Henry's reign. The royal palace was a scene of jollity and feasting during the several holidays of Christmas, Easter, and Whitsuntide, periods set apart in former days for the recreation of the higher as well as the middling and lower classes of the people. The abundance which decked Henry's board, and the richness and quantity of his plate, have been already mentioned; and in speaking of the entertainments of Christmas, the herald* who so faithfully records his master's progresses and triumphs, observes, "On New-Year's-Day at night there was a goodly disguising, and all this Christmas ther wer many and divers plays." Some little defalcation in the popular amusements occurred in another year, which however seemed to have been amply made up by the exertions of the fantastic master of the ceremonies chosen upon the occasion. "This Christmas," says the same writer, "I saw no disguisings, and but right few plays; but there was an abbot of misrule, that made much sport, and did right well his office."

Henry was attached to the manly exercise of archery, and solaced his leisure hours with the bow. The manuscript in the Remembrance Office already quoted, contains the following entries in the account of his expenditure: "Lost, to my Lord Morging, at the buttes, six shillings and eight pence;" and "Paid to Sir Edward Boroughe thirteen shillings

* Leland's Collection, vol. iv.

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and four pence, which the king lost at buttes with his cross bow."

Few princes have ever excelled Henry in the splendour of their gifts. He sent away the members of the Scottish embassy who accompanied the proxy of James, at the period of his betrothment to the Princess Margaret, loaded with costly services of plate; and Bacon assures us, that his benefactions did not spring from an ostentatious desire to obtain the praise of men. "He built and endowed many religious foundations, besides his memorable hospital of the Savoy," says the historian; "and yet was hee a great almes-giver in secret, which shewed that his works in publique were dedicated rather to God's glorie than his own."

The elegant and magnificent structure attached to Westminster Abbey, which bears Henry Tudor's name, remains a splendid monument of the monarch's architectural taste, and of the judicious appropriation of his wealth. Henry also attended carefully to the maritime concerns of England: he built the first large ship expressly intended for the service of the crown;* and was only prevented from engaging the celebrated Columbus in a voyage of discovery by the superior vigilance of Isabella, the spirited queen of Castille. Disappointed but not discouraged, he employed the Cabots in a similar enterprise; and under his auspices Newfoundland was added to the English empire. Henry's character was admirably adapted to meet the exigencies of his situation; but the qualities to which he was chiefly indebted for his triumphant reign, were cal-

* It was called "The Great Henry," and cost fourteen thousand pounds.

culated to impress posterity with very unfavourable and perhaps unjust ideas of the monarch's heart. Henry's virtues were useful rather than brilliant, and his vices less injurious to others than hurtful to himself. Educated in the school of adversity, and early acquainted with the treachery of courts, his impenetrable reserve, whilst it baffled the designs of a host of enemies, in concealing the motives for his actions, rendered him obnoxious to continual misrepresentation. Accustomed to guard every secret with jealous care from the venal crew who had invariably yielded to his bribes, he involved even common occurrences in a veil of mystery, and permitted his subjects to form the most erroneous opinions, when an open statement might have satisfied every doubt. Henry's confidents were few and well chosen; hence the impossibility of penetrating the deliberations of his council, and the difficulty of accounting for his silence upon the most important subject which occurred in his reign. The warmth of affection was chilled by this distrustful caution; and though his contemporaries were compelled to respect the wisdom which marked the king's administration, the number of his personal friends appears to have been very limited. Henry descended to unworthy stratagems in detecting the projects of his adversaries. He became acquainted with the conspiracies which were continually forming against him, by means which more frank and open-hearted men would have scorned; but it must also be admitted, that few have equalled him in the magnanimity which characterised his conduct, when the base and treacherous agents in his employment betrayed

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the confidence which they had been instructed to invite. Content with the measures necessary for his own safety, he abstained from the infliction of those heavy penalties which in former reigns had dyed the scaffold with blood, and had driven immense multitudes into hopeless exile, deprived of fortune, of country, and of name.

None of Henry's predecessors had ever evinced the tenderness which he displayed towards the lower classes of his subjects, a race hitherto despised and trampled under foot by the petty despots who set the laws at defiance. Grafton tells us, that the king "was an indifferent and sure justicier, by the which one thing he allured to him the hearts of many people, because they lived quietly and in rest, out of all oppression and molestation of the nobility and rich persons." Henry has been accused of carrying his gloomy caution and austere temper into the bosom of domestic retirement, of neglecting his amiable consort, and of denying his illustrious parent, the Countess of Richmond and Derby, the degree of influence which her virtue and talents merited. Neither of these charges appear to have been well founded. The ill effects of female ascendance, so apparent in the reign of Henry VI. and of Edward IV., would have justified the king in refusing to admit either his wife or his mother to a participation in the government; but it was one of Henry's felicities that both Margaret and Elizabeth were gentle and reasonable women, unambitious of interfering in public affairs. To the former he seems to have been a faithful and not an unkind husband,

to the latter he displayed the pious attention of an affectionate son.

Henry after his accession to the throne gratified his mother by appointing her to preside over the interior regulations of the royal household, and she was likewise by his direction sole arbitress in all ceremonials appertaining to feminine etiquette. The king attended readily to the recommendation of the countess his mother in the promotion of those persons who were honoured by her patronage; and his letters which are still extant breathe the tenderest sentiments of gratitude, esteem, and veneration for a relative whose various excellencies he appears to have fully appreciated.

Henry's manners, though cold, were neither stern or repulsive, and he strove to attach his subjects to his person by the most conciliating attentions. Bacon records two instances of the king's gracious condescension; but he adds that notwithstanding his "affability and princely graces, he could not entertain the good will of the citizens as Edward IV. did.*" In the eleventh year of his reign, Henry, "ever ready to countenance the profession of the law," honoured the sergeant's feast at Ely Place by being present with his queen at the dinner, and during his residence in Calais, whither he repaired whilst the plague raged in England, he courteously informed the mayor and aldermen of London of the honourable nature of his reception and the passing occurrences of the time, "which," says Bacon, "(no doubt) made no small talke in the citie."

The king also testified his respect for trade and

* Bacon.

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his anxiety to please the citizens by becoming a member of the Merchant Taylors' Company.* The king was dignified without being proud, he reproved the arrogance of his courtiers, and gave them an example of moderation, courtesy, and temperance, worthy of the highest admiration. Though not entirely devoid of the superstitions of the age, his piety was rational, fervent, and sincere. According to the custom of his church, and in the firm belief in its efficacy, he left a large sum to provide masses for his soul; but he did not rest entire dependance upon the prayers of others; the monarch had always attended strictly to his religious duties, and during a long and painful illness he deeply lamented the errors of his past life, and lifted up his heart in penitent supplications to that throne from which he alone hoped to obtain pardon and peace. Henry expired at his palace at Richmond, on the twenty-first of April 1509, after a reign unexampled in its prosperity, yet clouded by continual storms. Henry's death terminated the contest between the rival roses; he bequeathed an undisputed title to his successor, and his ambition, unlike that of Henry Bolingbroke, the first Lancastrian monarch, healed the discord which had ravaged the devoted land. Fortunate, if not happy, Henry died at the period in which he had attained the summit of earthly felicity; his kingdom flourishing and at peace, his foreign alliances almost unparalleled in splendour, his treasury overflowing with riches, and his name renowned throughout Europe. It is the opinion of Bacon, that Henry's star had reached its zenith, and must have declined before

* Speed.

the brighter glories of his son, a prince just starting into manhood, liberal, vigorous, and popular, and the undoubted heir of his mother's disregarded claim. If the suggestion be correct, Henry was happily delivered by death from a struggle more fearful and calamitous than any of those domestic conflicts which it has been the historian's painful task to record. The dying monarch in his will, executed only three weeks previous to his dissolution, endeavoured to enforce his former commands respecting the reparation he was so desirous to make to those persons who had suffered injustice from his inordinate passion for the accumulation of wealth. After giving directions concerning his funeral, in which he desires to be interred in his newly-erected chapel at Westminster, in a tomb sufficiently large to contain the body of his "dearest wife the late queen," he adds:

"And we will also, if any person, of what degree soever he be, shew by way of complaint to our executors any wrong to have been done to him by us, our commandment, occasion, or means, or that we held any goods or lands which of right ought to appertain unto him, that every such complaint be speedily, tenderly, and effectually heard, and the matter duly and indifferently examined by the Most Reverend Father in God the Archbishop of Canterbury that now is, or that hereafter for the time shall be, the Reverend Fathers in God Richard Bishop of Winchester, the Bishops of London and Rochester, that now be, or hereafter for the time shall be; Thomas Earl of Surrey, our treasurer-general, George Earl of Shrewsbury, steward of our house, Sir

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Charles Somerset, Lord Herbert our chamberlain, the Chief Justices of our Bench and Common Place that now be, or that at the time of our decease shall be; Maister John Yong, master of the rolls of our chancery; Sir Thomas Lovell, Knt., treasurer of our house; Maister Thomas Rothall, our secretary; Sir Richard Empson, Knt., our chancellor of our duchy of Lancaster; Edmund Dudley, Esq., our attorney; that at the time of our decease shall be our Confessor; the Provincials of the Freres Observants; and Maister William at Warer, dean of our chapel; or any six of them at the least, and three of our executors. And in case by such examination, it can be found that the complaint be made of a grounded cause in conscience, other than matters done by the course and order of our laws, or that our said executors, by their wisdoms and discretions shall think that in conscience our soul ought to be charged with the said matter and complaint, we will then that, as the case shall require, he and they be restored and recompensed by our said executors out of such ready money, &c. And to the intent that no such person, nor any other whereunto we shall after our decease stand indebted, have cause of ignorance of this our will and mind, we will that our executors, within three months next and immediately following our decease at the farthest, cause open proclamations to be made in every shire-town, and three or four other of the best burghes and market towns of every shire within this our realm, that if any man can, for any cause reasonable, claim any debt of us, or shew that we

have wronged him in any manner of wise, that might or should charge our conscience as before is said, that he resort to our said executors, and the said examiners, in such places as after their discretions shall be appointed, and then and there to be readily heard and answered, as reason and conscience shall in that part require."

The comments made upon this document by the learned editor of the "Testamenta Vetusta,"* from whence the above extract is taken, are of such value and importance that the author, in justice to the memory of a monarch too often the object of unmitigated censure, is irresistibly tempted to avail herself of the assistance afforded by so judicious and impartial a writer. "The whole of this clause," observes Mr. Nicolas, "has been introduced as being evidence that Henry, at the time he made his will, must have been visited with compunctious feelings for his rapacity and extortion." "And whilst," as Mr. Astle in his admirable preface to the will of that monarch remarks, "that the examiners are restrained to matters which they in their conscience should think his soul should stand charged with, and all such things are exempted as had been done by course and order of law, which had been the common mode of his oppressions, and that his instruments, Empson and Dudley, are in the number of these examiners;" still, it must not be forgotten, that as this direction of the dying monarch (for Henry died of a consumption in little more than three weeks after the date of his will) could only originate in remorse, and the desire to make the

* See vol. i. Testamenta Vetusta.

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best restitution in his power to those who had suffered from his conduct, it ought to be considered as a redeeming fact in estimating his character. Had he not "excepted what had been done by due course of law," he would have opened a door to complaints of every description; all who had suffered by the numerous attainders and forfeitures which occurred in his reign, might equally have been deemed persons "who had wrong done to him by us, our commandment or means," and whose goods or lands he "held, which right ought to appertain unto him." It is true that Empson and Dudley are appointed two of the examiners; but they are only two out of seventeen: and the king particularly orders that the court of examiners shall never consist of less than nine persons, of whom three are to be his executors: moreover, Dudley and Empson were also named amongst his executors; and, however justly subsequent ages may have condemned them, this circumstance proves in some degree that Henry thought highly of them, and allows the inference, that in associating them with the most distinguished men of the times in that delicate commission, he had no view of excluding from its attention those transactions in which Dudley and Empson were the chief actors. These notorious individuals are so well known, that it is not necessary to say any thing more about them, than that they paid the forfeit of their crimes very early in the following reign; and the proclamation which Hume describes as having been issued soon after the accession of Henry VIII., "to encourage complaints," was in all

probability that which is directed in the will of his father, and which that historian considers hastened, if not produced the fate of these wretches. Mr. Nicolas also notices a curious passage in the will of Henry VII. in which the monarch rests his claim to the English throne upon the right of conquest: he directs that an image of a king, representing his own person completely armed, should be wrought of timber, covered with fine gold, and richly enamelled, "the said image to kneel upon a table of silver and gilt, and holding betwixt his hands *the crown which it pleased God to give us with the victory of our enemy at our first field.*"

Compelled during his life-time, in deference to the national feeling, which would not brook the claim of conquest, to limit his pretensions to a plea of descent, which he was conscious was not tenable, or to the right of his wife, which he was unwilling to acknowledge, he chose to adopt the former so long as policy dictated the concealment of his real sentiments; but when the confession was divested of all danger, he indulged his pride by avowing the secret conviction that he owed the crown to his own sword, at the decisive battle of Bosworth Field.

Henry has been accused of neglecting the fine arts at a period in which the continent blazed with the splendour of those unrivalled geniuses whose works are the wonder and admiration of posterity; but from the surpassing magnificence which characterised the pageants and spectacles exhibited in his reign, it is evident that the inclination to encourage the improvement of refined minds was not wanting. It was Henry's misfortune rather than his

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fault that he had no opportunity of introducing and of fostering a better taste in England. His transactions with his foreign neighbours were chiefly, if not wholly political, and his ambassadors must bear the blame of overlooking or despising the extraordinary achievements of the old masters of the Italian school of painting, so worthy of their monarch's patronage. He had seen nothing in his youth beyond the court of Bretagne, and the age in which he lived was singularly destitute of native talent. Warton remarks that Henry's reign abounded with obscure versifiers, and that the only man who deserved to be styled a poet was Stephen Hawes, a writer who enjoyed the favour of the king, and who though destitute of invention had the merit of daring to depart from the dull taste of the times in the choice of Chaucer for a model, after his sublime fancies had been so long forgotten.

A rude sort of painting in oil had been introduced into England as early as the reign of Henry VI. and very extraordinary specimens of the excellence of the artists employed in enamelling and in the armorial devices so profusely displayed by princes and nobles, occur previous to that period. Paintings, in the infancy of the art in England, were confined to the emblazonment of shields, and to portraits, ornamental inscriptions, and heraldic bearings upon glass, decorations so expensive as to be restricted to cathedrals, and the palaces of kings; to these were subsequently added the illuminations of manuscripts. Seres tells us that Henry V. was presented with a portrait of Catherine, the daughter of Charles VI. but does not mention in what manner it was executed,

and the portraits of Cardinal Beaufort, Humphrey Duke of Gloucester, and other distinguished persons of their times, were discovered painted upon pannels, supposed to belong to the door of some cabinet or shrine in the Abbey of St. Albans.* It must be confessed that few if any steps were gained in this branch of the fine arts until the introduction of Holbein at the English court, in the succeeding reign. The chapel of Henry VII. at Westminster, affords however sufficient proof that the king possessed taste, which only required to be properly directed, and he may be said to have improved upon all the works which were performed under his inspection.

The armour of Henry's period was extremely beautiful, equalling if it could not surpass that of the preceding reign; a suit is preserved in the Tower of London of singular form and exquisite workmanship, which Dr. Meyrick assures us undoubtedly belonged to the king himself. Nothing can be more elegant than the covering from the waist to the knee, which consists of steel hollowed into plates, and beautifully worked; the back part is shortened to admit the saddle, but it hangs down on either side in becoming drapery. The plume of feathers also adorning the casque, and placed in the plate of Dr. Meyrick's splendid work,† in the manner peculiar to the period, rises partly in a rich tuft upon the crest of the helmet, while the rest waves gracefully over the shoulders, descending below the elbow.

Henry VII. in his early negociations with Scot-

* Strutt. † Treatise upon Ancient Armour,

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land, manifested a wish to procure alliances suitable to their birth to the daughters of Edward IV. The disturbed state of the neighbouring kingdom opposed insurmountable obstacles to this design, and they married more in accordance with the fallen state of their fortunes than the dignity of their descent. Cecily, who appears to have been a great favourite at court, since she is mentioned as bearing a distinguished part on all public occasions, became first the wife of John, Lord Welles, and secondly, of a gentleman named Kyme, of Lincolnshire; Anne married Thomas, Duke of Norfolk, and Catherine was united to William Courtenay, Earl of Devonshire; Bridget entered a monastery at Dartford, at a very early age, and died a nun; her other unmarried sisters, Mary and Margaret, did not reach maturity. Neither Lady Welles nor the Duchess of Norfolk left offspring, and the Marquis of Exeter, the grandson of the Countess of Devonshire, dying in the reign of Mary, the children of Elizabeth of York became the sole descendants of Edward IV.

THE END.

SHACKELL AND BAYLIS, JOHNSON'S-COURT.

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